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COMPENDIUM

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES
RELATED TO SENDING, HOSTING AND FACILITATING
INTERNATIONAL VOCATIONAL MOBILITIES WITHIN
ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

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Erasmus+

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES RELATED TO SENDING, HOSTING AND FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL VOCATIONAL MOBILITIES WITHIN ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

The document was created as a result of cooperation within the project "Europe for VET +"

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I INTRODUCTION

Vocational education and training (VET) is a crucial part in the development of the professional labour force in Europe. Due to accessibility of EU funds via Erasmus+ programme, multiple types of entities such as schools, VET centres, companies and other VET providers have gained the opportunity to take part (for a large number for the first time) in the international aspect of the VET system. International vocational mobilities offer enormous opportunity for all involved parties. At the same time, they require a lot of effort when it comes to preparation, implementation and evaluation.

This Compendium is a result of collaboration of 5 organisations within an international Erasmus+ project titled Europe for VET+ (www.europe4vet.eu). Partner organisations include intermediary, sending and hosting institutions. Key role in selecting good practices was played by over 28 VET institutions in Italy, Spain, Malta, Poland, which either have been visited personally, by representatives of the partnership or contacted remotely. Their suggestions and sharing of best practices and insights, together with feedback provided for the data already gathered has been an invaluable resource. What is more, the recommendations selected for the Compendium are based on opinions of over 133 participants of international vocational mobilities from various European countries. This unique perspective on organisation of vocational mobility projects has been reflected in the structure of this Compendium.

This document gathers good practices related to sending, hosting and facilitating international vocational mobilities within Erasmus+ programme. The aim of this document is to present VET providers with a wider perspective on expectations and needs of other parties involved in mobility projects, in particular: participants (students), sending institutions (schools), intermediary and hosting organisations.

We hope this Compendium will become an inspiration for improvement the quality in all VET projects.

I PERSPECTIVE OF INTERNS

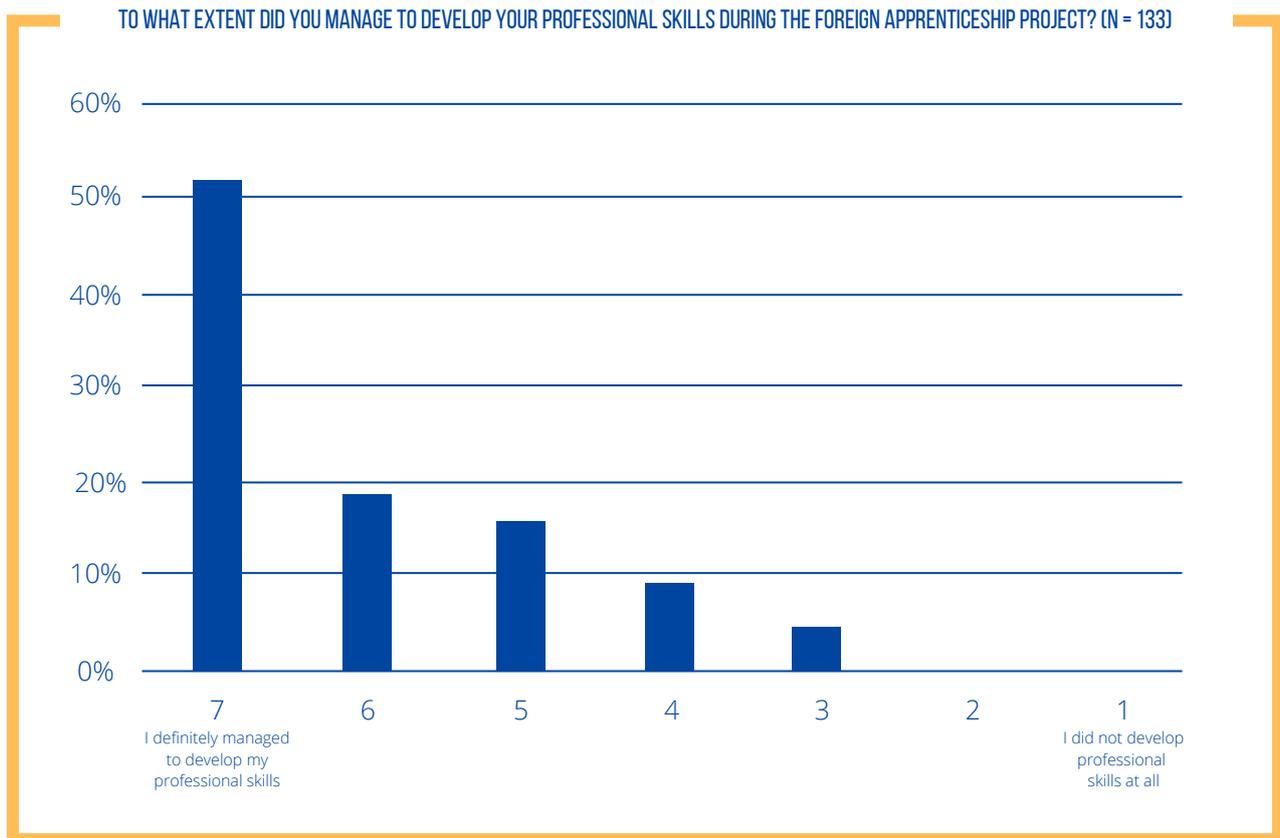
In 2018 and 2019 partners conducted CAWI research on students from Poland, Italy, Spain and Malta who have completed international vocational mobilities in 2018 or 2019. This research gathered 133 fully filled questionnaires during 2019. The following comments and conclusions are based on combined partner's experience and data gathered. The idea behind the study is to present the perspective of the participant, who is taking part in a vocational mobility project, as well as to emphasize what are the good practices and what could be improved in order to increase quality and student's satisfaction from mobility projects.

International mobility is primarily an opportunity to implement a vocational internship program. However, participation in the project is also a good opportunity for the participants to overcome some difficulties they encounter during this experience abroad, such as language and cultural barriers, the need to learn to cook, share a living space with others, the need to present one's opinion, etc. Therefore, one of the key elements of the study was to check which competences the participants wanted to develop during the project and which they actually managed to improve. The study lists three types of competences: vocational, linguistic and soft skills.

Vocational competences

The perspective of the participants shows that for a significant amount of them it was important that the internship developed their vocational skills - this was expected by 86% of the respondents.

On a scale of 1-7, the participants were asked to indicate to what extent the placement abroad improved their vocational skills. (1 - not at all; 7 - I definitely managed to develop my vocational skills). The results are shown in the chart below:



More than half of the respondents indicated that they definitely managed to develop their vocational skills. The fact that none of the participants chose the answer "not at all" was to be expected.

As **elements worth improving** in terms of vocational competences during the projects, participants most often indicated the **need to better match the tasks performed to the specificity of the skills they have at their disposal at the start of the mobility**.

SUGGESTION

It is worth implementing the creation of individual internship programs - developed based on the preferences and competences of specific participants. This requires greater involvement of all project stakeholders (direct online contact with the participant before departure by the host organizations to detail the tasks to be implemented; verification of new programs by sending institutions, having appropriate language and vocational skills before departure by participants, etc.)

*The quality of hosting placement should be verified by the sending organizations, e.g. by **visiting placement sites and observing participants during communication and performance of tasks.***

88% of the respondents were definitely, very, or rather, satisfied with the cooperation with their immediate supervisor in the host organization. In justifying the assessment, participants indicated that employers are nice and open to hosting interns - they were willing to help, integrate students with other members of their organizations, and supported them in case of problems. Among the elements that needed to be improved, communication barriers on the part of employers were most often indicated - **not all employees used the English language.** This was especially true for the construction, food and gastronomy services specialisations.

SUGGESTION

*It is worth putting emphasis on **preparing the participants to communicate in the languages of the host countries**, not only in English. This requires an increase in the number of hours of language courses before departure.*

Sometimes there were comments related to the issue of **too many interns supervised by one tutor.**

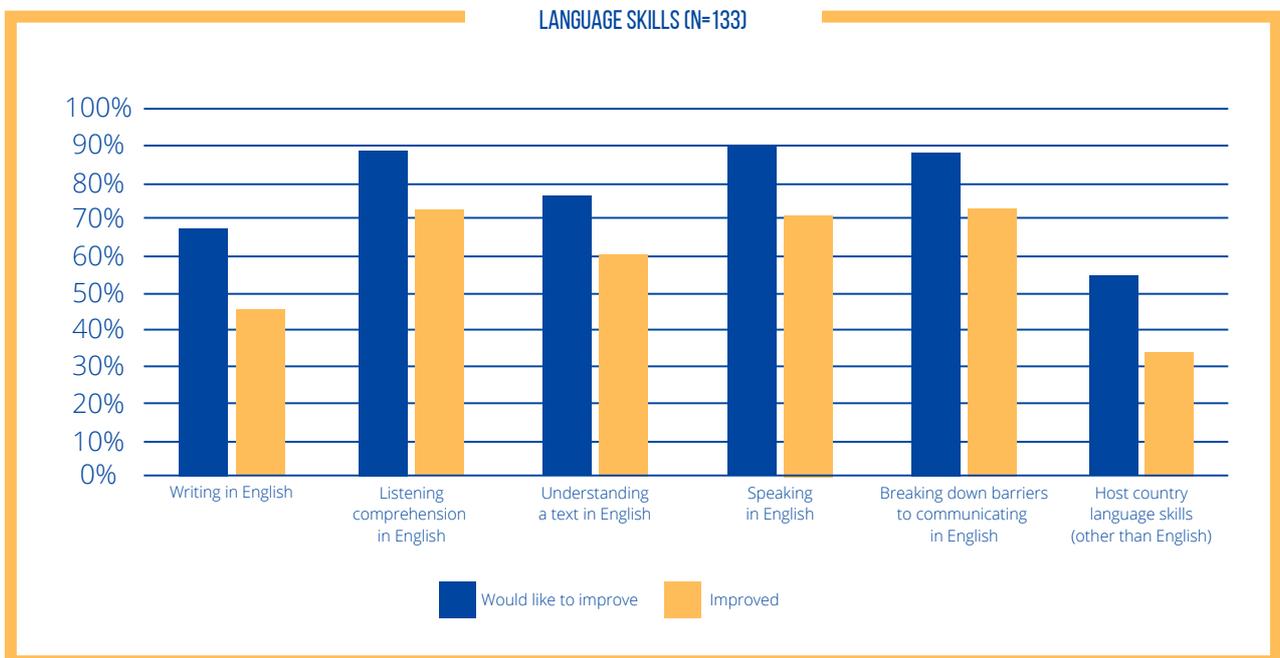
SUGGESTION

Correct selection of hosting companies to meet the needs of participants and those of sending organization requires monitoring prior to the beginning of mobilities. It is worth **talking to the specific tutor about their workload during the mobility period.** It should also be noticed that host organizations conduct normal activities and sometimes there are periods of more intensive work (due to variability workload in certain months). It is worth considering these trends in planning mobility dates.

Language skills

Each of the respondents expected their language skills to improve. The following skills were most important to the participants: speaking in English (90%), overcoming barriers in communication in English (89%), listening comprehension in English (89%) and understanding of texts in English (76%).

In the chart below, you can see that the skills participants wanted to develop the most overlap with those that had actually improved. 73% of respondents indicated that their listening comprehension had improved and that they got better at breaking barriers to communicating in English. Speaking English developed 71%, and understanding the text 61% of respondents.



The survey analysis showed that as many as 68% of people had developed at least three of the six language skills.

Participants who communicated in English at work rarely indicated increases in the change of competences in using the language of the host country.

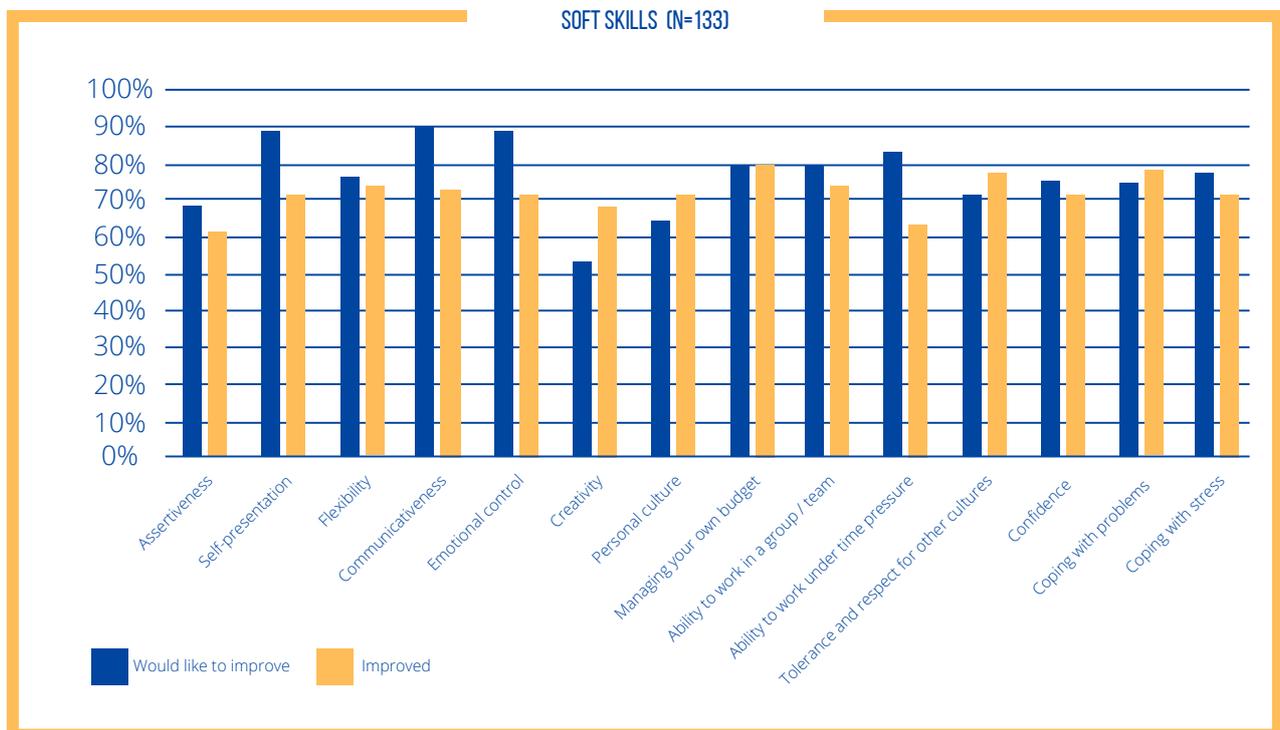
The results show that there was an increase in language competences, but it was not as large as initially expected by the participants. In the comments, it can be noted that a significant number of the respondents did not have the opportunity to use a foreign language in practice during long-term trips. This may lead to an overestimation of the impact that professional mobility will have on the level of foreign language proficiency.

Soft skills

Developing soft skills turned out to be no less important for the participants than developing linguistic or vocational competences. For each of the 14 soft skills mentioned, at least half of the participants indicated that they would like to develop them. The following skills were most important to the participants: communication skills (90%), self-control (89%), self-presentation (89%) and the ability to work under time pressure (84%). In turn, the least important turned out to be creativity (54%), propriety (65%) and assertiveness (68%).

The chart shows that the skills that participants wanted to develop do not always match those that were actually developed. Among the soft skills that could be improved during the project, participants most often indicated: managing one's own budget (80%), coping with problems (78%) as well as tolerance and respect for other cultures (77%).

As many as 63% of respondents indicated that they managed to develop all of the 14 soft skills mentioned to some extent. 82% have developed at least 10 of the indicated skills, and 95% have developed at least 5.



As part of the survey, participants also described their experiences from preparatory training. The following training courses were assessed most often in the case of foreign vocational mobility projects: Preparation of a CV and other project documents, English training, training of a second language (the language of the host country), cultural training, OHS and first aid training, consultation with a pedagogue / psychologist.

SUGGESTION

It is important to explain to participants the idea of international vocational mobility projects before departure. They should be aware of and expect the project to raise not only their vocational competences but also other competences.

SUGGESTION

*Foreign **mobility projects lead to a higher increase in tolerance and respect for other cultures and coping with problems in comparison to what the participants expected.** This is a very positive conclusion that should be emphasized during recruitment and promotion.*

I Pre-departures trainings

The table below presents the summary of the participants' assessment for each of the courses, i.e. the average assessment of the course usefulness (on a scale of 1-7, where 1 - very useless; 7 - very useful), positive aspects of the course described by the participants and elements that should be improved (conclusions based on respondents' answers)

TRAINING	AVERAGE GRADE	POSITIVE ASPECTS	WHAT SHOULD BE IMPROVED?
Preparation of CV and other documents training (n = 112)	5,67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presenting the rules of creating a CV attractive for the employer transferability of training (useful not only for the project, but also in personal life) conducting training in a computer room with access to a computer for each participant access to training materials with examples of completed documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> more individual help from the teacher
English training (n = 118)	5,73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revision of basic vocabulary revision of professional vocabulary breaking the language barrier strong emphasis on the use of English by participants during the classes no grading more relaxed atmosphere to a school lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classes should focus on breaking the language barrier and using already acquired vocabulary more interactive form of classes, introducing interesting forms of learning (e.g. gamification) -shorter, more frequent classes instead of infrequent, few hour long classes
Second language training (n = 90)	5,36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning basic vocabulary and phrases access to training materials training materials in the pocket-form (which you can take with you on a trip) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> more hours of training practicing on every-day situations introducing interactive forms of learning
Cultural training (n = 112)	5,52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning about the culture of host country learning about the traditions and customs of the host country discussion about cultural differences reducing cultural shock getting to know the flight procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing the number of hours of cultural training in favour of classes in the second language (host country language)
Health and safety training and first aid (n = 46)	5,36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refreshing the rules of first aid conducting occupational health and safety classes by a person of the same profession 	-
Consultation with a pedagogue / psychologist (n = 24)	5,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> team building discussion of how to deal with stress and separation from the family better emotional preparation for the trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in addition to group classes, the possibility of an individual conversation with a pedagogue / psychologist

One of the most frequent comments about the training was about the way how the classes were conducted.

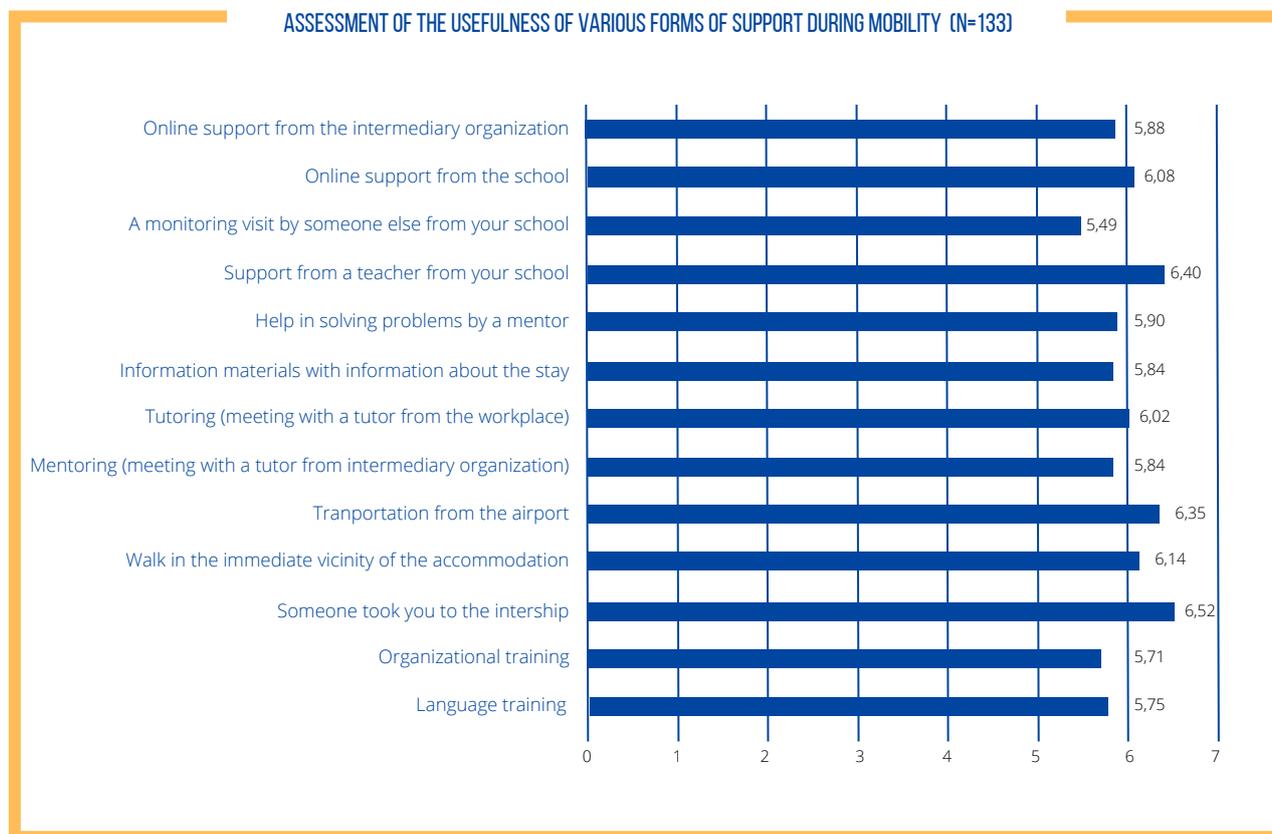
SUGGESTION

Participants appreciated the activities that were conducted in smaller groups, with a more relaxed atmosphere and no grade. Activities in which **games** were used to teach, especially in the case of language training, were received very positively.

SUGGESTION

An additional advantage is if the group has the opportunity to bond and do team building activities before departure.

In addition to training, participants receive additional support in the project. The chart below presents the average utility rating of various types of support received by project participants. Each of the items was scored on a scale of 1-7, where 1 - very useless; 7 - very useful



The results show how important almost any form of additional support and help was for the participants. The most important thing for the participants was the introduction to the placement on the first day and the support of the teacher from the school.

SUGGESTION

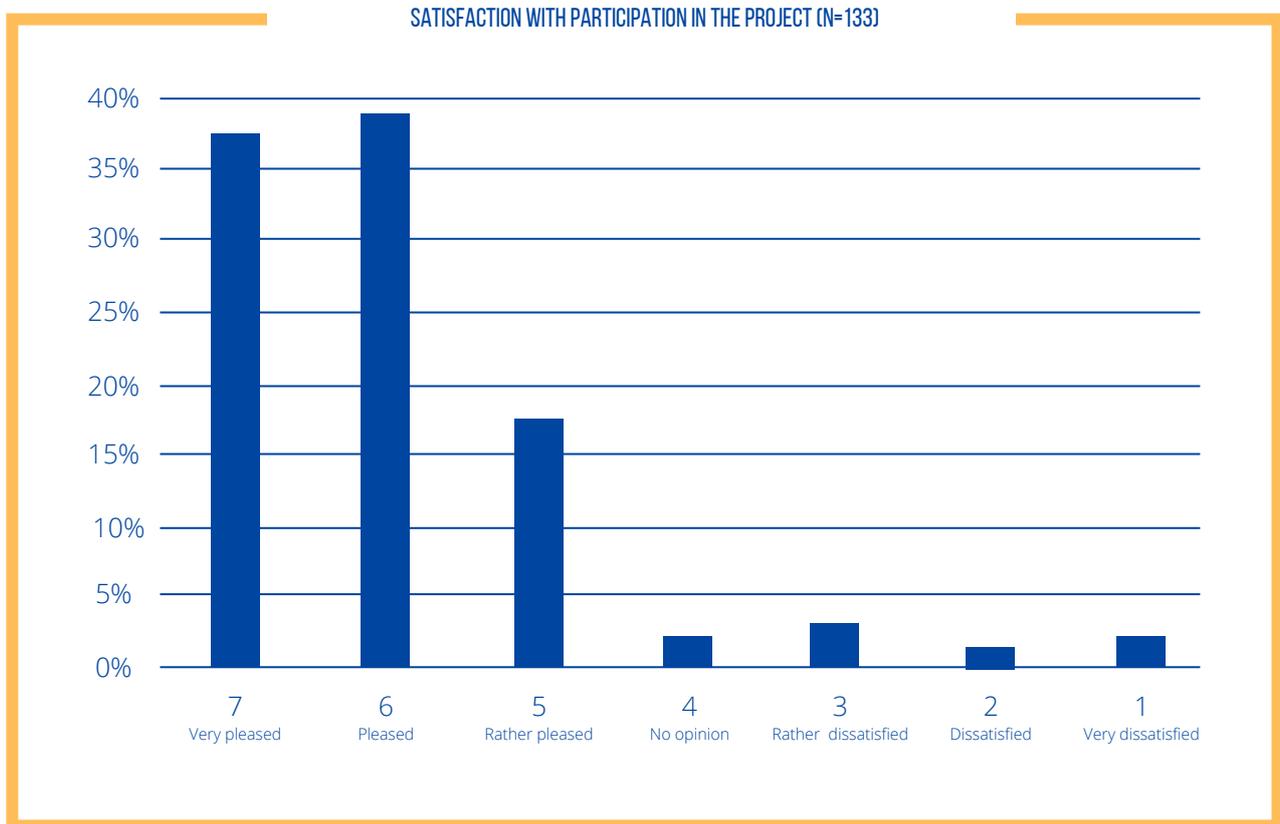
It is important to ensure the safety of participants, e.g. by the participation of a tutor during the mobility, taking them to the place of internship or providing transport.

SUGGESTION

The assessment of the monitoring visits was less important for the participants. However, due to the maintenance of the quality of project activities and the possibility of developing cooperation between organizations participating in the project, it is recommended to carry out such visits.

Satisfaction with participation in the project

The survey shows the importance of the diversity of activities in the project as well as the appropriate preparation and support of the participants. This translates into the participants' satisfaction with professional mobility - as many as 92% of participants are satisfied with the participation in the project of professional internships abroad.



The above results indicate an enormous need for the implementation of international vocational mobility projects. Most of the participants indicate an increase in vocational, linguistic and soft competences, and the whole process is ranked to have brought multiple benefits in the process of student's development. This is radically different from the assessment of the standard education process, thanks to which such mobility projects can have an even greater impact on young people, increasing their professional mobility.

SUGGESTION

It is worth implementing activities in the field of international vocational mobility.

| PERSPECTIVE OF SENDING INSTITUTIONS

Sending institutions are responsible for assuring proper quality of mobility projects. This role requires excellent understanding of the needs and expectations of all parties involved in conducting projects. Aim of this section is to present crucial areas of vocational mobility projects focused on actions taken by the sending institution.

I Management

Preparing, organising, monitoring, evaluating and disseminating results of a vocational mobility project requires creation of a project team. Individuals within the team should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Each project should have one coordinator who manages different areas of the project and people involved in it. Head officer of the sending institution should always be informed about any key progress reports or issues. **The more involved members of sending institutions are, the better for the project and the transfer of know-how within the organisation.**

Project team members should frequently meet to discuss progress of the project and transfer the information from particular departments / areas. **All team members should receive proper compensation for their work and at the same time be responsible for the quality of their work.** Structure of the project team should be adjusted to the requirements of the sending institution. Each member should be aware that project issues sometimes require instant attention regardless of standard working hours. It is up to the project team to create necessary procedures related to dealing with emergency situations. It is very important for all team members to remember that they are in fact a team - they should work together, support one another and try to improve the quality of the project.

SUGGESTION

Dividing the tasks from different areas of the project to different people is considered a good practice. Each area should have one main person responsible for managing it. Selection of areas is project specific and should be well thought out, examples of areas are: evaluation, monitoring, dissemination, recruitment, logistics, partner relations, etc. It is a good idea to involve more than one person into each area in order to maintain capacity for conducting the project regardless of any potential issues to particular project team members (such like illness, change of work).

Nowadays it is essential to use online tools when managing a project. Constant threat of COVID restrictions in various countries affects us all. Schools can be closed if the number of cases rises in their region. Thus **conducting meetings online** (both within the project team, and with participants, parents) is a standard practice nowadays

Good practices gathered from various institutions allowed us to recommend using the following tools for implementing mobility projects:

- google drive (or any other virtual storage place where multiple people can upload/edit/download files),
- Gant chart (for monitoring the progress of a project),
- Facebook (for communicating with participants / partners via group),
- whatsapp/signal (for communication),
- tik-tok (for presenting short movies about project, answers to frequently asked by the participants questions), Z
- oom/MS Teams (for online video chat).

Identified good practice is preparation of a dissemination plan before the project event starts. **It should include activities carried by all parties, aims, people responsible for each activity, deadlines.** This plan can be extended to all activities within the project.

SUGGESTION

Based on our experience, the integration process of participants is severely disturbed if they do not have the opportunity to take part in stationary training before departure. This may affect a number of social issues arising during mobility.

I Accompanying persons - group supervisors

Choosing a group tutor is an important part of the project. **The tutor supervises the group during international mobility and is responsible for helping the participants and motivating them to implement the internship programs correctly.** What is more, those supervisors are responsible for supporting students during mobilities especially in crisis management, coping with stress, new environment, etc. They should be in fact mentors of students, helping them to grow not only in the vocational area.

The sending institution may freely formulate the responsibilities of the group tutor, defining the scope of their responsibility, and thus determining the scope of the group's independence. For example, the **tutor may be responsible for assisting participants in carrying out excursions not organized by the intermediary partner, supervising the collection of materials for dissemination activities, or helping participants to solve everyday problems.**

Regardless of the tasks assigned, it is worth ensuring that the group supervisors should have a set of competences that will enable them to fulfil their duties - these skills should be checked at the supervisor recruitment stage. Sample recruitment criteria/preferred competences of a tutor:

- teaching experience
- knowledge of foreign languages (min. English, preferred language of the hosting country)
- teaching vocational subjects
- experience in long-term group supervision (e.g. from previous projects/trips)
- availability
- motivation to take part in the project

It is a good practice to **prepare a training for group supervisors before departure**, during which they will be thoroughly acquainted with the idea of the project, their duties and the obligations of the participants. **Teachers should also participate in language training (if needed) or cultural training**, which will further improve their competences and enable the correct implementation of the tasks entrusted to them.

SUGGESTION

Tutors can stay with the group for the entire duration of mobility. It is worth considering what exact tasks they should perform before, during and after the mobility period. They could be a valuable resource in gathering monitoring data, establishing new relations with hosting organisations, finding new opportunities in project development, etc.

I Recruitment process

Participants are a central part of the project. For the recruitment process, it is recommended to create a **Recruitment Committee – responsible for conducting and supervising the recruitment process**. An example of the composition of the recruitment committee: Project Coordinator, Vocational teacher, School's pedagogue.

One of the tasks of the Committee should be to create a formal document - **Regulations of recruitment and participation in the project**. This document should contain the **rules and criteria for recruitment, required documents, the rights and obligations of participants, the rules for resignation from the project and the rules for removal from the list of participants**.

SUGGESTION

Along with the start of the recruitment process, it is worth organizing an information meeting for interested persons. This is a good opportunity not only to encourage student to apply for participation in the project, but also to present the idea of the project and provide key information. In this way, potential candidates are more aware of what kind of activities and responsibilities await them in the project, and they can also remedy their doubts by asking questions. During the meeting, the recruitment procedure itself and the requirements for project participants should be also explained.

SUGGESTION

If possible, involvement in the recruitment process of past participants (from previous projects) as advisors is strongly recommended. They are the best ambassadors and can answer the questions of participants-to-be.

Recruitment should be open, fair and transparent. The selection criteria should be clearly defined and communicated to the candidates. The key principle during recruitment is to maintain equal access to the project for all interested candidates who meet the eligibility criteria.

Sample recruitment criteria:

- assessment of English skills (eg. via interview)
- vocational skills test
- grade point average in vocational subjects from the previous grade
- behaviour grade / class attendance frequency

The recruitment criteria should enable an objective assessment of the candidate.

It is not recommended to include criteria such as "teachers opinion" or "student's motivation to participate in the project", which constitute a subjective opinion.

When designing the recruitment process, it is necessary to make it accessible to all students. Such process which does not discriminate in any way on the basis of someone's socio-economic background, family situation, disability, sex, religion, race, place of living etc

SUGGESTION

It is considered a good practice to introduce an additional point bonus in the recruitment criteria, which is to provide equal opportunities and additional motivation for these people to participate in the project.

During the recruitment process sending institutions should include a **procedure for rechecking the assigned recruitment points**. Since human errors occur occasionally it should be possible for the candidates to review their final score and if needed have it corrected. This also improves the fairness of the entire process.

SUGGESTION

As a result of unplanned events, a situation may arise in which the participant will not be able to continue participation in the project. When creating the list of project participants, it is also worth creating a "backup list" - a list of people from the ranking list who were selected in the first round of recruitment.

Persons from the backup list should go through all preparatory trainings together with project participants so that they are ready to go abroad in a situation when someone from the first round of selection is not able to do so.

I Pre-departure training

Preparing participants for all challenges during mobility is a demanding and important task. In the table below you can find examples of good practices of training courses identified by the partnership during Europe for VET+ project.

TYPE OF TRAINING	DESCRIPTION / KEY FEATURES
Preparation of CV and other project related documents	<p>During the training, participants should get acquainted with a tool for preparing CV and other documents (we recommend using the Europass CV builder tool: https://europa.eu/europass/eportfolio/screen/cv-editor?lang=en).</p> <p>Sample documents should be discussed, as well as tips on how to prepare a CV that will be attractive to the employer. Students should prepare their own documents in English or in the hosting country native language. Documents should be reviewed before submitting to hosting companies, and feedback given to the student. It is recommended to prepare additional to the CV documents, like cover letter, portfolio, etc. to present the participant in the most comprehensive way to the potential employer. Minimum of 2 hours of training is recommended.</p>
Language training - English	<p>The aim of the course is linguistic support of students who will conduct internships within the project. Workshops should include explaining for example grammar as well as cultural differences but the main focus should be practical conversation training. The subject matter should mainly concern vocational vocabulary. During the course, students should gain more confidence in communicating in English, which also translates into fluency and quality of expression. Minimum of 30 hours of training is recommended.</p>
Language training - language of the host country	<p>The course should be designed to learn the basic phrases that facilitate communication with local residents. The program should emphasize the use of spoken language in everyday life in a grocery store, restaurant / café, ordering food on the phone, asking for directions, introducing oneself, meeting new people, communicating in a company, etc. Minimum of 30 hours of training is recommended.</p>
First aid / health and safety training	<p>Classes should consist of lectures, demonstrations and practical exercises of proper behavior of young people in the event of various emergencies. Students should get to know the basics of first aid. This course should include a part focused on safety issues in a workplace. Minimum of 8 hours of training is recommended.</p>
Cultural training	<p>The aim of the training should be to prepare participants for the mobility in terms of culture, thus reducing the culture shock that they may experience abroad. During the training the culture at work, style of communication, customs, daily schedule in the country of destination should be discussed, as well as cultural differences, tolerance and counteracting discrimination and racism.. Additionally, the topics of air travel and in-flight safety should be covered. Min. of 8 hours of training is recommended.</p>
Social - emotional learning	<p>The aim of the training should be to teach participants to understand themselves and their own emotions as well as to manage and control them. The training should consist of two blocks - theoretical and practical. In the theoretical part, the participants should be introduced to the concept of emotional intelligence and its components (e.g. self-esteem, empathy, assertiveness, cooperation, motivation), learn the techniques of defining their own emotions and dealing with them. The second part should be more interactive and should consist of some games, as well as individual and group exercises - which should provide a framework for practically using learned skills. . Minimum of 8 hours of training is recommended.</p>
Consultation with a pedagogue	<p>Consultation with a pedagogue should be a supplement to pedagogical training, during which participants should have the opportunity to express their concerns, needs and expectations about going abroad. Consultation should be individual. Minimum of 2 hours of training per student is recommended.</p>

| Hosting companies

Establishing and maintaining relations with hosting companies is another important area in mobility project. Quite often sending institutions are collaborating with intermediary organisations thus limiting contact with hosting companies. This should not be the case.

Direct contact with hosting institutions is essential to provide proper quality of work placements.

By signing the internship documents the company tutor expresses intention to host interns and assumes responsibility to train them and show them what work life is like in the field.

The direct supervisor of the participant - tutor, has the task to monitor the placement tasks and make sure, with the support of the intermediary organization, that the activities and training of the intern are directly linked to the learning outcomes defined by the project. **The tutor of the company should provide feedback about improvements of the students and the activities carried out.** The tutor should evaluate the performance of the students according to the learning outcomes previously established.

Before the beginning of the internship the tutor is supposed to clarify with the sending or intermediary organizations what are the requirements needed to carry out an internship in his/her company. **Tutor should carefully read the learning agreement, talk with the future intern and discuss all tasks and responsibilities (before start of the mobility).** Final agreements should be confirmed by sending and intermediary institution.

I Intermediary organisations

Sending institutions usually do not have enough resources to provide proper work placements for a large number of students in a foreign country. Thus they are using services of intermediary organisations transferring part of the budget of the project to them. This is a standard practice within Erasmus+ programme. It is worth to remember about several issues which can arise during this collaboration from the sending institution perspective.

All parties should sign a partnership agreement specifying cooperation and procedures in case of emergencies (like cancellation of mobilities, poor quality of work placements, issues with accommodation, etc.). Agreements should include as well areas like: **hosting placements** (dates of publishing final list, procedures of changing the placements, quality standards guaranteed, participant skill level guaranteed by the sending institution, deadlines), **accommodation** (standard of accommodation, dealing with potential damages), **cultural activities** (trips, meals provided within budget), **additional support for the group** (safety procedures, contact people, additional online/offline meetings before departure of the group with representatives of the intermediary organisation), **administrative matters** (list of documents required by sending and intermediary organisation, exact conditions of those documents - ex. 2 originals of certificates per student - not an original and a copy, time which each party may take before replying to any questions, means of contact and people responsible), **financial matters** (VAT charge - this cost may not be acceptable depending on specifics of sending/intermediary organisation, payment rates, fees in case of breaking particular rules within agreement), **data processing** (conditions and ways in which data of participants and tutors will be processed by other parties, in particular sensitive data - health issues).

SUGGESTION

It is worth considering conducting payments in several transfers after meeting certain criteria (eg. 40% - pre payment after signing partnership agreement, 40% after confirming all placements and accommodation, 20% after group returns home and all documents are in order)

All parties should work together to provide the best possible quality of activities during the project. It is possible to transfer some additional tasks to intermediary organisation (like support for the group, monitoring, dissemination) but regardless of the agreement the sending institution is responsible for all activities carried out during the project based on a financial agreement signed with the national agency of Erasmus+. Therefore **sending institutions have to have proper mechanisms in force (if needed) to ensure a certain level of quality from the intermediary organisation.**

SUGGESTION

Good cooperation between intermediary organisation and sending institution can be a good and valuable experience for all parties and overall become an added value to the project. However before selecting the partner it is worth to check their credentials with other sending institutions which have had the opportunity to work with this party.

| Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is a very big part of conducting vocational mobility projects. Each project should have a plan of monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring

Monitoring understood as systematic collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information from activities carried out within the project in terms of financial and material aspects. The purpose of monitoring is to ensure compliance of the implementation of the project with the previously approved plan and goals.

Monitoring allows you to see how the work on the results is progressing in relation to the plans set out in the application - how much was done, how much money was spent, how much time was spent. Monitoring helps in quality management as well as in risk management.

SUGGESTION

Effective monitoring in a project may include answering following questions:

- *Do the activities undertaken lead to the planned result?*
- *Do the assumptions of this activity need to be reformulated?*
- *Do the results periodically obtained lead to the achievement of overall goals?*
- *Are the funds released according to the schedule?*
- *Are all parties fulfilling their role as expected and agreed upon?*

Monitoring should not be limited to just gathering information. Data should be prepared in an appropriate form and provided to project managers. Establishing communication mechanisms to ensure that the necessary information is used effectively is crucial. An example of a monitoring mechanism may be project progress reports, surveys, data analysis by the project team, etc

Evaluation

Evaluation meant as the assessment of the value of a project against specific criteria.

Evaluation helps to implement project activities in accordance with the adopted proposal. It allows to check whether the planned activities have been successfully implemented, and thus illustrates the quality of the project by showing its strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation also allows to find out what the participants, other target groups and potential stakeholders think about the project. Evaluation should be planned at the project design stage - a work schedule should be developed and the form of the report should be defined. The resources allocated to conducting the evaluation should be adequate to its scope.

Examples of evaluation criteria:

EVALUATION CRITERIA	DEFINING	
Relevance	To what extent do the project objectives match the needs of its recipients?	OBJECTIVES VS. NEEDS
Efficiency	To what extent are the expenses incurred in the project economical?	OUTPUTS VS. EFFECTS
Impact	To what extent have the project objectives been achieved?	PLAN VS. IMPLEMENTATION
Utility	To what extent are the real effects of the project compatible with the needs of its recipients?	EFFECTS VS. NEEDS
Sustainability	To what extent are the effects of the project long-lasting? What has changed in after the end of the project?	IMPACT ON THE OBJECTIVE
Innovation	To what extent does the project bring new solutions?	CREATIVITY

WHAT CAN BE EVALUATED?

- the quality of the results
- increase in participants' knowledge
- increasing of competences
- project work progress
- quality of organized partner meetings
- involvement of partners / participants
- communication efficiency
- the effectiveness of the project's dissemination strategy

Evaluation methods - examples:

- questionnaire - paper / electronic
- interview - individual or group
- observation - active or passive participation in project activities
- analysis - development of documents, material effects, contextual documents in the project
- alternative evaluation methods (interactive applications, case study...)

I PERSPECTIVE OF HOSTING ORGANISATIONS AND INTERMEDIARY ORGANISATIONS

Erasmus+ work placements play an important role in the skills development of young people. Internships within European programmes in the VET sector are the combination of learning and working that is considered to yield particular benefits for apprentices with regard to the value they hold in the labor market.

In order to provide proper quality of work placements it is crucial to include the needs and expectations of hosting (responsible for conducting actual internship programmes during mobilities) and intermediary organisations (responsible for organising hosting placements, accommodation, cultural activities, mentoring, etc. for interns during mobility).

During Europe for VET+ each partner conducted in-depth-interviews with hosting companies in their countries (Poland, Spain, Italy, Malta). Overall data from 14 organisations was gathered. In addition, during translational partnership meetings we were able to visit 10 hosting institutions and discuss key issues related with vocational international mobilities and suggestions related with prevention mechanisms.

The following part will present key areas where the majority of issues could arise during vocational internships.

| Foreign language

One of the main areas where most difficulties occur is the communication between participant and tutor. Here the most problematic could be the too limited ability **to communicate in a foreign language**. Some students have more limited ability to use English or other foreign language. This makes communication difficult. What is more, students are sometimes not aware that lack of communication skills will directly affect the possibility of conducting more advanced tasks within their vocational area. At the same time, some **hosting companies often have only few people who can communicate fluently in English (in case of countries other than Malta)**. Sometimes students are tutored by employees who do not speak English. Willingness to overcome language barriers and usage of various tools (like google translate) is a skill in itself which can be very useful for the intern. The key factor however has to be the understanding, attitude and willingness to communicate by both the students and the tutor.

SUGGESTION

To include the language course at schools (before student's departure) section regarding the terminology associated with a specific field (construction, mechatronics, hairdresser etc.). Knowledge of the basic words regarding tools and equipment that can be used during the work placements and would improve the quality of the communication, saves time and increases the quality of work placements.

I Cultural differences

When hosting a foreign student for a traineeship, companies as well have shown interest in everyday life of the students, national habits and the country/city/rural place of origin. All of this to better understand and prepare the mentor and its team at the time of welcoming the students, trying to avoid cultural misunderstandings and to ensure more efficient support to the young interns, helping them as well to integrate as best as possible with the work environment and the work culture of the country (greetings, expressions, places to visit, typical gastronomy of the city...).

The main difficulty in this area for a hosting company could be the student's **unawareness of the cultural differences between the countries** (small but significant gestures, greetings, different approach to spend breaks during the work, siesta - no-siesta time during the day). Some of the problems in the companies involve student's poor awareness of the different daily practices to their home country.

SUGGESTION

It is recommended to include "Cultural awareness and differences" training at school prepared before the arrival of students to the work placements. Methods like interactive role-play workshops, discussions etc. should be included.

SUGGESTION

Meeting with previous Erasmus+ interns (could be as well from another country) at the school is a great opportunity to influence participants and encourage them to take part in the project. It offers the possibility to exchange experiences, ask questions, get some tips and useful information.

I Project documentation

The companies have underlined the importance of keeping the project **documentation translated into English**. Many of the students are having the additional documents like "daily training log" only in the language of their origin, so in terms of the Polish language, for instance, they find it difficult to evaluate and sign the documents without knowing its meaning. That is why the introduction of the bilingual documents (PL-EN) at the school level would be an ideal solution or at least the obligation for the students to fulfil the diary tasks in the practice notebook in both languages suitable for the side of the school and the company.

Another difficulty for the company is the **validation of the Europass Mobility certificates**, that are sometimes delivered by the sending institution to the company only in their national language. This process, in order to be efficient and useful, has to be completed by the companies. In order to do that, they need to understand the documents which they are signing to be actually able to validate presented materials. Therefore it is paramount for those documents to be translated, at least in one copy.

Companies also emphasize that there is **too much paperwork** which needs to be signed (at least 2 copies of learning agreement, 2 copies of quality commitment per student) as well as very long student assessment cards. This insight should encourage the European Commission and National Agencies of Erasmus+ in each country, to change official requirements in this regard.

Furthermore, the companies have expressed that a key item often missing in various mobility projects is a **well prepared CV** by the participants, including detailed information regarding: **work and educational experience** (with information about particular tasks which student can/has conduct/ed, areas of specialization, duration), **other vocational experience** (volunteering, hobbies, vocational certificates), **precise language skills** (in speaking, reading, writing), **other relevant information** (digital skills, social skills, etc.), **current picture** (professional, without filters or face covering), **personal information** (date of birth, mobile number, e-mail address, etc.). Sometimes students do not use proper formatting or standard form of CV. Both hosting and intermediary organisations **recommend using Europass standard** of documents.

Companies have also shown interest in receiving extra information about the students' study programme to adapt the work experience to the topic of interest of the school and competences of the student which are to be assessed.

SUGGESTION

*By **delivering documents (CVs) at least 3 months before arrival** of the group it is possible to select the best work placements for each student and adjust (if needed) learning agreements to meet requirements of the school, potential of work placement and preferences of the intern*

| Student´s attitude

It can happen that even with the best tutor, usage of most advanced equipment or completing the most demanding learning agreement the result is achieving poor vocational and personal learning outcomes for the participant. This phenomenon can be caused by an extremely relevant factor, which is the student's attitude towards mobility/project.

Students should be well aware of the structure and aim of the international vocational mobilities, and represent a proactive attitude during the internship. Unfortunately, quite often the importance of this area is undervalued resulting in various issues for the employers and intermediary organisations alike. The following part will present a selection of most frequent factors to consider and some preventative measures.

The difficulties for the companies regarding the student's approach during the internships are often closely connected to their attitude and behavior. **Lack of communication skills or even willingness to communicate** is the most common problem among the students. Participants from various countries sometimes think about mobilities as a vacation time. This is reflected in their work ethics, in particular: **not arriving on time, lack of responsibility, inappropriate use of tools, ignoring tasks assigned by tutor, lack of productivity, constant use of mobile**, etc. Those students are difficult to deal with during an internship. Often they are related to other **interpersonal issues** (like lack of proper respect offered to the group supervisor, other students).

SUGGESTION

Improve cooperation between student, mentor and tutor (online/in person sessions) to solve any issues, to understand the roots of the poor behaviour or lack of motivation.

Selecting only well motivated students to take part in vocational mobility. It is better to send fewer but better motivated students.

Connect with hosting companies online before arrival to better understand role of the intern in the organisation and tasks which will be asked of him/her.

Have a person from the student's environment who they trust and have a good relationship with talk to the students to help them find the best way to get the most benefits from the traineeship experience and help find them internal motivation and to encourage growth mindset.

I On-arrival training

The on-arrival training needs to include **orientation** for the students **in the new environment and culture** in which they will be living for the duration of the stay and **will give them an idea of the professional habits in the hosting country**. What is more, it should include **a tour of the surroundings** of the accommodation showing the main points of interest, both cultural and practical (like supermarket, bus/train stops, pharmacy, ATM, etc.).

The orientation day is useful for the students as well to obtain information about the **contact people** from the intermediary organisation in case of need during the project and the development of the activities during the stay. The orientation should include a meeting in **the hosting company** before the beginning of the first actual working day of internship that allows the student to learn **how to use the means of transport and move around the town** to reach the company, they meeting of the company tutor who will be in charge of giving them tasks, training them and supervising their activities and communicating to the intermediary organization. The students should be informed of the **regulations and local customs** to follow **both in the place of accommodation, in the city and at the workplace**. Getting to know the city can be carried out through the methodology of non-formal education (like a city game).

The knowledge of health and safety basic procedures is a base for a successful internship. Companies have expressed their opinions regarding the lack of sence of responsibility and knowledge in students in that specific area and have underlined how important it is to wear protective clothing, the proper use of machinery and tools, to follow the procedures and protocols at the construction site and always obey the tutor´s indications.

SUGGESTION

It is highly recommended for all students to complete on-arrival-training conducted either by intermediary or hosting institution.

SUGGESTION

*It is imperative that during on-arrival-training participants are introduced to all **safety and COVID related procedures**.*

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Each mobility project is unique, therefore all content presented in this Compendium should be considered as advisory and not mandatory. Moreover, not all recommendations may apply to each particular project due to specifics of national or regional requirements affecting involved parties.

Preparing, conducting and evaluating a vocational mobility project is a very extensive task. Due to limited resources this Compendium offers only selected examples and should not be perceived as a complete guide on proper implementation of VET projects.

This Compendium offers good practices gathered in organisations and participants living in Poland, Malta, Spain and Italy. It is highly recommended to conduct additional study which should include other countries and other stakeholders of the VET sector. Additional research limitation was the number of participants who took part in the survey conducted to collect data related with the student's perspective on vocational mobility projects. Although 133 is not a small number, it is recommended to extend this research to a larger scale. It is worth considering if certain variables like profession, age, competences (e.g. English level) or other factors may affect experiences in vocational mobility projects. Our study did not focus on this aspect.

It is important to emphasise that vocational mobility projects should be just one part of international development for all involved parties. In particular, the sending institutions should take advantage of these opportunities and try to include additional activities apart from the mobilities - eg. searching for new ways of improvement in the education process, networking, starting new collaboration projects, etc. Mobility projects should be just one part of international development of an organisation, and therefore it is recommended to perceive them not as an aim itself but as one of the tools for consistent development.

All involved parties - participants, sending, intermediary and hosting institutions - with whom the partnership of this project had contact during preparation of this Compendium, have stressed that vocational mobility projects offer enormous opportunity for both personal and professional development for all stakeholders.

It is crucial to keep preparing, implementing and improving those activities in order to provide Europe with a well trained professional work force, and tolerant, open minded, responsible society. We hope that this collection of good practices will inspire other VET providers to do that.

COMPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

We also recommend that you familiarize yourself with the following materials, which may prove useful in the implementation of vocational mobility projects:

Documents for the construction technician profession:

- [Learning outcomes and criteria for verification within individuals units](#)
- [Methods of verifying learning outcomes](#)
- [Trainee Assessment Card](#)

Documents for the logistics technician profession:

- [Learning outcomes and criteria for verification within individuals units](#)
- [Methods of verifying learning outcomes](#)
- [Trainee Assessment Card](#)

Documents for the mechatronics technician profession:

- [Learning outcomes and criteria for verification within individuals units](#)
- [Methods of verifying learning outcomes](#)
- [Trainee Assessment Card](#)

- [Participant evaluation questionnaire - example](#)