

Newsletter n°5

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Mobility around Europe!! COMENIUS & Mobility (2007-2013)

According to European policies and goals, 'mobility' is always a significant aspect within Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) which is compounded by four sectoral-programmes: Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig.

Specific articles in the Newsletter have been dedicated on each of the sectoral-programme, focussed only on their 'mobility' actions.

*This article is focussed on **Comenius!***



Comenius addresses the teaching and learning needs of all those in pre-school and school education (till upper secondary education), and the institutions and organisations providing such education.

Among its Operational Objective, Comenius aims "to improve the quality and to increase the volume of mobility involving pupils and educational staff in different Member States"

In this regard the programme foresees the specific activities for the mobility of individuals to another European country, such as:

- ✓ exchanges of pupils and staff within the context of a project or partnership,
- ✓ participation in training activities for teachers and other educational staff,
- ✓ study and preparatory visits for mobility, partnership, project or network activities;
- ✓ assistantships for teachers and potential teachers

Comenius is therefore targeted basically to everyone involved in school education, such as:

- ✓ Pupils in school education up to the end of upper secondary education
- ✓ Schools, as specified by Member States, from pre-school up to the end of upper secondary level
- ✓ Teachers and other categories of staff within those schools
- ✓ Associations involved in school education

- ✓ Research centres and bodies concerned with lifelong learning issues etc...

Concerning 'mobility', the following actions can be supported with a Comenius' funds:

- ✓ Preparatory Visits: the visits allow potential partners to meet in order to define the aims, objectives and methodology for future project
- ✓ Assistantships (Assistant and Host School): the objective is to give future teachers (assistant) the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the European dimension to teaching and learning. Assistants receive grants to enable them to undertake an assistantship in a host school of another European country. The host school designates a fully qualified and experienced teacher to act as a supervisor for the assistant for the improvement of teaching skills
- ✓ In-Service Training for Teachers and other Educational Staff (IST): the objective of this action is to help improve the quality of school education by enabling staff to undertake training in a country other than that in which they normally work or live. The training activity must have a strong European focus in terms of subject matter and the profile of trainers and participants.

Student ambassador – Raquel & Poland!



Hi to everyone!

I am Raquel and I come from Spain. I spent four months in Poland while doing a vocational training in a company. The competency of the firm includes software and hardware sale and service.

When I think about my professional skills I have learned during my stay in Poland I think of the quality process of the software that I got familiar with. I have also learned the way of working in a software company in Poland, the differences and the things in common with Spanish companies and process of quality which a software company has to develop to check their product before give it to the final client. Among other personal skills which I have gained in the whole experience, not only in my job. I have also improved my English, and even I have learned a little bit of Polish.

About my personal point of view, this experience have been completely enriching, I got to know the Polish culture, I could travel around Poland and also around Germany and Czech Republic, I have lived an experience which made me a open minded person who is familiar with different ways of life. I have managed to develop a point of view that I didn't have before this experience and I think that is important for my future job and for my future life. Because of that I recommend to everybody this kind of experience. When I applied for this training I wanted to go to England to improve my English and after, when I was selected to come to Poland I thought how I could learn English in Poland. However I am sure this experience has been better than if I had gone to England, I have realized how everything is working here. Although the language could be a problem in some situation, we have found the way to explain what we want and what we need.

Apprentices - A Comparison of Germany and Switzerland

The apprenticeship training systems in Germany and Switzerland are similar, but they produce very different benefits for the companies. While a Swiss company shows a benefit at the end of a three-year training stint that exceeds costs by EUR 2,700, a comparative German company clearly bears net costs, the latter exceeding benefits by a whopping EUR 22,600.

These are the findings of a joint study by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education in Bonn and the University of Berne that has just been released as a CESifo Working Paper. CESifo Researcher Stefan Wolter, Professor at the University of Berne and one of the paper's authors, explains that "our findings show that three factors can explain the difference between both countries: different relative wages, different amount of time spent by trainees on the shop floor and their assignment of productive tasks."





Most of the ca EUR 25,000 net cost difference between both countries is accounted for by the benefit side. Benefits are twice as high in Switzerland as in Germany. An important factor is the difference in relative wages between both countries: apprentice wages in Switzerland are significantly lower than those of skilled workers as compared to Germany.

Even more important, however, is the participation of apprentices in productive processes. While in Switzerland apprentices spend much time engaged in actual production, those in Germany concentrate mostly on training exercises. This clear difference in the way apprentices are tasked explains more than 60 percent of the benefit differences.

“In Switzerland companies faced with net costs like those in Germany do not provide apprenticeship training at all”, says Swiss education expert Wolter, referring to further analyses. The differing behaviour can be accounted for largely by the different flexibility of the respective labour markets. In the case of German companies, the labour market permits them to profit from former apprentices even after the apprenticeship has ended. For the future, however, it remains to be seen whether this training model will be compatible with the changes taking shape in the labour market.

An Ifo study shows that relative apprentice wages in Germany have risen markedly since the early 1990s, while the amount of time spent by apprentices in production has sunk. “It is not only that Switzerland teaches us how to create more apprentice positions”, Ludger Woessmann, head of the Human Capital and Innovation Department at the Ifo Institute, explains: “We used to do it differently ourselves.” Since the gaining of competency is much more effectively achieved by qualified work in actual production than by rote training exercises, Mr Woessmann recommends that Germany rethink how apprentices are used in companies.

Ref : Regina Dionisius, Samuel Muehlemann, Harald Pfeifer, Günter Walden, Felix Wenzelmann, Stefan C. Wolter: Cost and Benefit of Apprenticeship Training – A Comparison of Germany and Switzerland, CESifo Working Paper 2287