

AQUAP NEWSLETTER

No. 4

Apprenticeship philosophy

A lot of VET schools or colleges have their own vision on apprenticeships and the role of apprenticeships in the total educative programme.

The European Commission is also involved in this theme and has the aim to increase the number of graduates with work experience abroad. Just increasing this number is not the aim of education. Going abroad by apprentices must have a reason, a goal, must fit in the programme of the student, and technical, social and personal skills to be developed abroad have to be clear. Employers prefer new employees who have good social skills, have used a foreign language, feel responsible for their job and have a good work attitude, but also have respect for other nationalities, culture and religions. The gap between different cultures has not to be closed but has to be bridged! This has to do with the ability to put you in the position of the other and to learn something about living conditions of another nation. This is probably the most important part of going abroad for some work experience.

Aquap was born because many schools protect their database with placement possibilities and keep these for their own students. This, because schools have invested money to develop a list with (good, trustable, qualified) placement companies abroad which was often a long process of visits, talking's, etc. Now we all have become wiser and prefer to share our knowledge and experiences. So Aquap facilitates students to search in a number of databases.

We are discussing the connection with EUMOVE (portal) and want to stimulate more schools to join this development.

Once students can search a placement of their preference, we have to think about the quality as i.e. quality of the coach, practical assignments, responsibility, recognition of learning outcomes, etc. This follow-up is now being realised through the Leonardo da Vinci project QAFP (Quality Assurance of Foreign Placements in Europe – www.qplacement.eu)

Teachers, managers, organisations on national and European level discuss this but what is the meaning of the student. Their experiences are important because from your own experiences

and from other one's experiences one can learn. That is what APEX is aiming at. We like to receive stories from apprentices about their adventure, experience, mistakes, success abroad and to learn about the importance of their apprentices abroad for their live. These stories will be 'translated' in a comic book.

Recognition

Once we are discussing the role and position of 'work based learning' we will meet new items that have to be improved. We have discussed ECJET but in reality there are only few situations that schools accept the judgement of a company coach and schools examine the practical skills themselves. This has to do with trust!

A participant in our group asked 'how do you know that the apprentice has achieved practical competencies?'. The answer here was short and clear: if the farmer values the students' work so much that he can hand over the company for a couple days to the student who than runs the company, than the practical skills of the student are sufficient.

Work experience and especially abroad will support the young graduates to find a job because employers like to employ youngsters who are aware of responsibility, able to communicate clear, used to adapt to different situations and different persons, and who know a bit of the competition in business.



The unemployment rate in Europe among school-leavers is huge and divers as is shown by a picture in our local newspaper. Work experience might help to graduates to employment.

Progress

Access

The **green sector** covers all companies that are active with food production, food processing, plants, animals, nature, maintenance of natural

6. References/links

Last time we presented some websites with placement information. New sites are:

Teaching, training and tutoring at the workplace. *VET personnel plays a central role in assuring the quality of vocational training. The shift towards lifelong learning and the re-definition of the role of in-company trainers from instructors to coaches / facilitators has meant that trainers find themselves challenged by new trends, needs and expectations: read more at: www.workplace-tutor.eu*

On our project site you may find some important documents related to apprenticeships.

www.greenplacement.nl

Stagemarkt

(<http://www.stagemarkt.nl/>) provides also information in English through a special site: <http://www.globalplacement.com/>

Stagemarkt offers you a great number of apprenticeships in The Netherlands for almost all sectors at accredited companies.

Outside The Netherlands, in close cooperation with a global network of franchise partners, our website has grown and is still growing very quickly (more than 5.000 student subscriptions a month). Besides a global network Globalplacement.com has been supported by the European Union initiative Leonardo da Vinci.

Nationale Vacaturebank

(<http://www.nationalevacaturebank.nl/stages>) offers a great number of jobs in very different sectors.

8. The Network

The project did not aim to establish a network although a more or less spontaneous network has risen. This because the group of interested countries has grown and in these countries the numbers of VET colleges interested to join this development and to make use of the placement facilities is increasing.

We now have placement facilities in The Netherlands, France, Turkey, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Slovakia, Hungary, etc. This increases the cooperation between VET colleges in different European countries; to start in the green sector and in the future also in other sectors. It is aimed through cooperation of knowledge centres in different sectors to expand the usability of the placement information.

7. The Partnership

These are 12 partners and affiliated partners.

The partners in the project are:
AOC Raad Hans Blankestijn
hans.blankestijn@acoraad.nl



EUROPEAN EDUCATIVE PROJECTS BV; NL; Jos Paulusse - jpa@planet.nl



Aequor; NL; Fred van Koot - fvkoot@aequor.nl



EUROPEA International; NL; Ton Stok; a.stok@wellant.nl



LEB Ländliche Erwachsenenbildung Thüringen e.V; DE; Evelyn Sittig; thuringen@leb.de



IARTC International Agricultural Research and Training Center (IARTC); TR; Dilek KAHRAMAN; dkahraman@utaem.gov.tr



Vacimezo; Judit Covic; HU; covic.judit@vacimezo.com



TK Formazione; IT; Bettina Borger; b.boerger@tkformazione.it



Slovak University of Agriculture; SK; Zuzana Palkova; Zuzana.Palkova@uniag.sk



Also represented in this partnership are:

Eibert van Engelen
Nordwin College
Leeuwarden, The Netherlands
e.vanengelen@nordwin.nl



Harry Krul
AOC Oost
Doetinchem, The Netherlands
hkrul@aoc-oost.nl



9. Coach training

The project has developed training for teachers to establish training for coaches at the company. Often farmers, entrepreneurs or company employees have not been educated how to coach a trainee. The assignments for students are becoming heavier and better connected to the education of the apprentice. This requires that the coach at the farm or company has a better insight in the demands of the apprentice and the VET College. Increasing the importance of work based learning implies that also the placement companies have to improve their coaching. To advise these companies, to supervise placements, to help apprentices abroad with assignments, communication, or difficulties partner countries will need so-called company advisors-accreditors. Courses have to be developed to train teachers or experts for this new task.

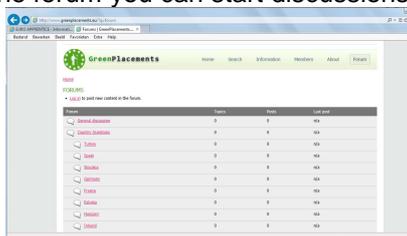
10. Social media

Students can share their placement experiences with other students through our twitter account, face book, etc.. Followers can read about their work, experiences, troubles, housing or travel solutions, etc. that colleague-students have had during a placement abroad.

We like to develop an interesting and well supporting facility for students aiming to go abroad for a placement period. Polite, critical and to the point information about your experiences abroad are welcome.

Forum

On the forum you can start discussions.



Final Conference

AQUAP (Brussels, 24-1-2013)

The most important conclusions /recommendations are;

- The aim was European exchange of placement information. Now the website with this information is on air; the process is: Orientation -- Matching -- Internship -- Evaluation

- The database is filled with learning companies in a number of countries
- Quality criteria, organisation charts, training courses for coaches, job profiles and training materials are available
- The developed placement facility should be hosted and maintained on European level
- Improve and increase cooperation between similar initiatives

There is still work to do:

- The different status of student mobility (in person, in school programs, in national programs, etc.)
- Character of partner organisations and companies
- Balancing work based learning with actual economic situation
- To increase the interest for work based learning abroad as well as of VET colleges as of students
- Tackling international placement problems as language, financing, number of students going abroad, recognition of learning activities outside the school (portfolio).
- Let (European) branch organisations put attention to the importance of international mobility (COPA. UEAPME, etc.)
- The data have to be enriched and social media should be used, training places evaluated and apprentices should be able to present their profile.



There was much more in this final seminar of AQUAP. The experiences of partners, the policy of the European Commission was presented, discussion on the recognition of learning outcomes and the applied tools (EQF, ECTS, ECVET, EQAVET and Europass) have been mentioned. The shared purpose is to increase transparency, comparability of qualifications, mobility, validation and registration knowledge, skills and competencies focusing at validation of learning outcomes.

Hungary is in for changes in Green VET

In the past it was not too common for Hungary to send students in Green VET abroad for an internship, and it was ever so rare to take foreign secondary school students to farms or companies. There were no real possibilities for that because there were no official practical placements in the country. The main task for us in Aquap was to start up the system, create the Hungarian database and make international exchanges on VET level possible for the future generations to come.



Students present experiences

During the course of the last two and a half years we have organised four Farmers Meetings keeping our entrepreneurs updated, and trying to convince more and more agri-businesses to join in the database, and become an official European practical training company. Hard work paid off as today we have more than 40 members and the number is still growing.

Two of our young and enthusiastic farmers have completed the AQUAP Coach Training, and now it is time for them to pass over their knowledge and experience and prepare their fellow colleagues for the coming of foreign students.

While travelling around the country and the continent with dissemination activities, we made new relationships, got in touch with lots of Green VET schools all over Hungary and Europe. Our network of partners grew bigger, new doors opened and we have seen a lot of good practices in cooperation between schools and companies. Due to our work in AQUAP we got invitations to three other projects and that tells a lot.

Our small VET school got the opportunity to get into the network of European apprentice mobility, and what is more our farmers have also become part of the international practical placement system.

We have learned a lot, our chances have widened significantly, and hopefully in the future we'll have regular exchanges.

Hungary is now ready for foreign apprentices!

Final brochure

Our final brochure with the achieved results and progress is soon available on our website.



Unsubscribe

Not interested in this or next newsletters, please send an e-mail with **unsubscribe** and we remove your address from the list.

If you want to know more, please mail us at: jpa@planet.nl

Jos