TTT4WBL

BAfA Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

TTT4WBL –Testing New Approaches to Training VET and Workplace Tutors for Work Based Learning

WEB: TTT4WBL-PROJECT.EU

The project supports an innovative approach – tandem training – for the training of trainers in work-based learning (WBL) of the Baltic countries – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. It will develop and pilot a sample training program for in-company and vocational education and training (VET) institutions' trainers.

A common competence profile of WBL trainers in the Baltics will promote a common Baltic vision while respecting the needs of each particular country in developing the training porgrams for WBL trainers. At a later stage each Baltic country will develop its own training program in relation to the national priorities, legal framework and the interests and opinions of involved stakeholders in the particular country and based on a common agreed competence profile of a WBL trainer.

A Finnish research institute is providing a methodological support based on the analysis of the opinions of involved stakeholders from all the Baltic countries.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

- National Centre for Education (Latvia)
- The Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia
- The Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Baltic Bright (Latvia)
- Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (Lithuania)
- Lithuanian Association of Vocational Training Institutions
- Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (Lithuania)
- Tartu Vocational Education Centre (Estonia)
- JAMK University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

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The first newsletter of the TTT4WBL project gives an insight into the developments of work-based learning (WBL) as a new form of VET training in the Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. There are similar challenges in all three countries and the newsletter describes the progress regarding introducing WBL in their VET legislation. Further follows an overview of the main activities implemented within the TTT4WBL from the project beginning in February 2017 till October 2018.

Work based learning in the Baltic States

Work-based learning is a comparatively new form of vocational education and training (VET) in the Baltic States. A major impact on the WBL developments in the Baltics had the EU Erasmus+ programme project " National Authorities for Apprenticeships: Implementing Work Based Learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (WBL-Balt)" implemented in the period from 1 December, 2014 till 28 February, 2017 – under the co-ordination of the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia.

The WBL-Balt project acted as a facilitator for national reforms in the three Baltic States, and as a tool for enhanced cooperation, exchange of information and experience, as well as for peer learning on implementing VET reforms, and especially for promoting and developing further WBL and apprenticeships.

Even though Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia implemented their own activities, within this project mutual cooperation and coordination was ensured.

The main problems addressed in the WBL-Balt project were incomplete legal framework to accommodate WBL needs, insufficient WBL availability due to tradition of school-based VET, insufficient involvement and awareness of stakeholders, in particular employers. At the same time, there was an increasing pressure from the social partners and policy makers to improve the quality and labour market relevance of VET.

In 2015, during the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, **The Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships (BAfA)** was launched. It is based on the Declaration of

of cooperation between the three Baltic States on the VET issues. The BAfA Declaration was signed by the three Ministers responsible for vocational education of the Baltic countries on June 22, 2015, during the Meeting of Ministers in charge of Vocational Education and Training, European social partners and European Commission, devoted to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. This Declaration provides the basis for co-operation of the three Baltic countries in the field of VET with a particular emphasis on WBL and the promotion of WBL activities in all Baltic States.

Estonia

In Estonia there is regulation (Regulation by the Minister of Education and Research) in place since 2014 for implementing apprenticeship in VET. In 2015 an EU structural funds program was launched in order to promote workplace based learning and increase the number of apprenticeships in VET. Part of the program is creating 7200 new apprenticeship training places in different VET institutions around the country. Currently 2018 there are 4200 apprenticeship places in Estonia.

The regulation on apprenticeships stipulates that the employer has to pay the apprentice a minimum salary during the apprenticeship. For most employers this is a high threshold as for interns coming from VET institutions no pay is needed. The employers must provide a tutor to every apprentice and the responsibility for training the workplace tutors lies with the VET institutions. With the aforementioned program the VET schools have received additional funding for organising tutor trainings. Although partner enterprises emphasise the need for tutor training the registration for courses has not gone according to plan and the number of participants remains low. The feedback of the similar problems is also from Tartu Vocational Education Centre partner training institutions.

Tandem Training for VET and workplace tutors was first piloted in autumn 2017. Although it has been hard to assemble the groups of tutors the feedback from the participants has been positive. Having both enterprise and school tutors present allows for discussion forum regarding the training in the workplace and has proven successful.

Latvia

In Latvia the implementation of WBL started in 2013 with a pilot project involving a limited number of VET institutions, companies and learners. In July 2016 the Cabinet of Minister Regulation on the organisation and implementation of WBL was adopted. Apart from other requirements for the involved stakeholders there are two important requirements for the companies:

1) the employers have to pay the WBL student a salary (based on job contract) or a stipend (grant);

2) the workplace tutor has to possess not only professional competence but also a certain pedagogical competence – as by implementing the WBL program in the company environment he is also involved in the education process when pedagogical competence is indispensable.

To support the policy developments, an EU structural funds project to support the implementation of WBL was launched in 2016 – with the aim to involve more than 3000 students in WBL till the end of 2022. Given the relatively small number of VET students in Latvia, it is a challenging goal. The project is being implemented by the social partner – Employers Confederation of Latvia – in close co-operation with the 12 Sector Expert Councils thus ensuring the training compliance with the fast changing labour market demands.

Lithuania

The latest amendments to the Law on Vocational Education and Training (2018) provides a legal basis for apprenticeship. It clarifies the provisions for apprenticeship organisation: apprenticeship labour contract and a VET contract should be concluded between an apprentice and a VET provider. The VET Law also states that sectoral professional committees should participate in planning the in-take of apprentices. However, apprenticeship has still not gained its position as a clear VET pathway and receives little attention from VET providers and companies.

In 2016, the new Labour Code and accompanying legislation entering into force on 1st July 2017 introduces two types of apprenticeship contracts (pameistrystės darbo sutartis): with and without learning agreements. For apprenticeships that are part of formal VET, the regulation stipulates employers' responsibility to ensure that apprentices acquire the learning outcomes defined in the programme. Overall contracts framework provide that work and learning time should not exceed 48 hours per week in total; apprentices' salaries should not be less than a minimum wage; learning time spent in the VET institutions would not be paid by the employer and should not exceed 1/3 of the contract duration.

Review of the accomplished TTT4WBL project activities

The TTT4WBL project was launched in February 2017. At an early stage of the TTT4WBL project a **Needs analysis** report for the three Baltic countries was elaborated. The report was prepared by the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (Lithuania) in cooperation with the rest of the Baltic partners. The Needs analysis report reviews the country- specific issues with regard to WBL tutor training and describes differences and similarities in existing training approaches. The approaches to competence profiles of WBL tutors and related training requirements are analysed, as well as approaches to assessment and recognition of WBL tutors training competences. Needs analysis served as terms of reference for preparing of the joint training programme in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and for development of Experimentation protocol.

Study visit "WBL Tutor Training in Finland" was organized by Jyvaskyla University of Applied Sciences, May 1-5, 2017 for 18 participants (12 lead trainers - multipliers, 4 Ministry representatives and 2 VET school representatives) from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The aim of the study visit was to gain insight into Finnish apprenticeship system, VET policies related to WBL and training of WBL tutors. The programme was designed in a way that participants had an opportunity to learn about Finnish WBL tutor training system from different perspectives. The programme included visits to VET teacher training institutions, VET schools, school enterprise, and companies, governmental bodies (National Agency of Education and Ministry of Education and Culture). Time was also allocated for reflection, discussions, networking, exchanging experiences and learning together.

Discussing pilot phase experiences

Another activity that helped trainers to be prepared for joint Baltic Train-the-Trainer workshop was **introductory seminars/peer learning workshops** organized in Kaunas, June 15, 2017 and Tartu, June 19, 2017. The aim of the peer learning was to introduce the Latvian example of tandem training programme and methodology, discuss the lessons learned during the study visit in Finland, and reflect on each country's specific needs regarding WBL tutor training, share training methods.

The joint Baltic Train-the-Trainer workshop was aimed at preparing lead trainers of WBL tutors in 3 countries. The workshop was held in Riga, October 2-5, 2017 and gathered 16 participants (6 from LV and LT, 4 from EE). The workshop was delivered as an example model (prototype) of tandem training providing opportunity for trainers 'to be in the shoes' of WBL tutors. The last workshop day was devoted to planning and drafting national training programs and meeting with researchers to be aware about the evaluation methodology and to receive instructions about their role and responsibilities during the field trials.

Three national joint training programs for WBL tutors based on prior research and analysis have been developed. They are based on an existing joint training programme in Latvia, but adopted to national contexts considering findings from needs analyses, good practices in partner countries, lessons learned from the study visit to Finland and the joint Baltic Train-the-Trainer workshop. All programs have been piloted during the 1 st phase of field trials at national workshops and have been reviewed and improved before the 2 nd phase of trainings taking into account feedback from participants, trainers 'self and peer evaluation, and proposals received from researchers.

Partner meeting in Tartu, 27-28 February, 2018

The 1 st round of national trainings was implemented from November 2017 till January 2018. The total number of trained WBL tutors in this round is 191 (Latvia -70, Lithuania - 54, and Estonia - 67) involving about 50 companies and 20 VET Schools. The training programme is developed for 16 hours and countries could decide how to plan their training sessions. All workshops are moderated by 2 lead trainers. Based on participants feedback and researchers' proposals the tandem training programme was reviewed and improved in the 2 nd phase of training which started in March 2018 and will last till November 2018.

The experimentation methodology was designed by the Finnish research partner, JAMK University of Applied Sciences. It includes the definitions of concepts, participants and their roles, as well as research tools to be used in data collection and experimentation methodology. Data is collected via tutor surveys and questionnaires; trainer and tutor group interviews (random sample) and student & company surveys. In the pilot phase altogether 169 WBL tutors, 24 VET students, 16 VET school managers and 16 company managers responded to the experimentation questionnaires. Furthermore, 10 trainers participated in the tutor group interviews. In addition, in Lithuania and Latvia there were group discussions involving representatives from other project partner organisations to share the impressions of the 1 st field trials. The analysis and interpretation of the data and feedbacks from the 1 st round of field trials regarding the impact of the joint training approach on competences of WBL tutors and on cooperation between VET institutions and enterprises provided proposals for improvements in joint training methodology implemented in the 2 nd round of national trainings.

Lists of local SMEs to address for involvement in WBL were compiled by Latvian and Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce. In Latvia, a questionnaire was developed and sent to 987 companies which are all LCCI members. 19 companies were chosen to be included in the 1st phase of pilot considering their wish to participate in WBL, availability of resources, knowledge about WBL. Kaunas CCIC made the list by sectors of companies to match them with sectoral schools. Another list that Chamber operates in the project is the list provided by Lithuanian MoES. The Ministry's list includes companies which have already established co-operation with VET schools in providing apprenticeships.

Tandem training workshops for WBL tutors

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