

Thematic Seminar Outline

Venue of Thematic Seminar: Athinais Cultural Center, Kastorias 34, Athens

“WBL. An innovative VET practice focused on Apprenticeships”

General Context

In the modern European economies of crisis, the need for closer cooperation between the world of education and work becomes more intense in order to reduce skills mismatch that emerges between of the learning outcomes achieved within the formal education system and the real labor market needs. Employers often indicate that workers, despite the high level of education, lack a number of skills and qualifications needed in the workplace.

Studies at European level confirm and put forward the above conclusion. According to CEDEFOP's research in the near future, Europe risks to face a major problem in terms of skills gap that will lead to a rapid increase of the high levels of unemployment. Statistics show that more than 20 million new jobs are expected to be created between 2006 and 2020 and 85 million jobs will be offered as a result of retirement or other reasons.

Within this context, the European Commission focuses on finding solutions and innovative education and training practices that will reduce skills mismatch and create a competitive and flexible workforce able to adapt to the constant changes presented in the modern working environment.

Since 2002, European countries and the social partners collaborate through the Copenhagen process (Copenhagen Process) for an effective organization of vocational education and training system (VET). Following this effort, in 2010, the European Commission with Bruges Communiqué put in place an action plan for a modern and attractive Vocational Education and Training that was completed in 2014. After reviewing the results of its implementation, the EU set five key priorities for the further improvement of vocational education and training systems for the period 2015-2020, the most ambitious of which promoting the Work Based Learning (WBL).

Work Based Learning

Work Based Learning (WBL) is the training method that enables learners, who may be graduates of all educational levels, to gain qualifications and skills that cannot be attained by the formal educational system. In particular, the contribution of learning in the workplace through apprenticeship schemes has an important place in enhancing youth employment and combat unemployment.

Thematic Network WBL

Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships constitute a key part of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) in most EU countries. In order to promote its implementation in the EU Member-states, European Union created the Thematic Network "Work Based Learning" (NetWBL). The Hellenic National Agency participates in this network together with the 29 National LLP Agencies and its successor Erasmus+ Programme. One of the key goals of the network is to bring together actors from all VET sectors of the Higher Education field across Europe, such as social partners, VET providers, responsible for the creation of national policies on apprenticeship issues and training, youth representatives and members of the labor market so as to promote learning in the workplace in all Member States.

Objectives

The purpose of the thematic conference is to present the activity of the thematic network "Work Based Learning" (NetWBL) in the educational community in Greece, to record the practice of learning in the workplace in all its forms, while simultaneously aspires to be a focal discussion point among social partners, educational institutions, and representatives of the labor market for the exchange of views and best practices.

More specifically, the key objectives of the conference are:

- Presentation of the characteristics of the educational process of learning in the workplace and the forms implemented in the Greek educational system.
- Presentation of case studies of WBL implementation in practice of the Greek economy.
- Linking WBL with higher education.
- Enhancement of multiplier benefits resulting from the implementation of WBL in Greece. Obstacles and challenges in the implementation process.
- Presentation of the actions of NetWBL network and mainly the electronic database "Work Based Learning TOOLKIT".
- Information about the apprenticeship institution and its implementation in the Greek Educational System.
- Examples of projects Erasmus + KA1 / KA2 developing the educational WBL method

During the conference, the following questions are going to be tackled:

- Why is it important to promote WBL to reduce unemployment and improve the competitiveness of the country's work force.

- What is the role of the social partners (employer and employee representatives) in the formulation and implementation of apprenticeships in Greece.
- How learning is connected at work with other European educational tools on the basis of the creation of an attractive and effective vocational education and training system.
- How learning is implemented in the workplace in formal and non-formal education and what are the targets for the future.
- What are the latest developments in the institutional framework of the implementation of apprenticeships in Greece and in Europe

The conference will be structured in two areas:

• **Plenary Session:**

“WBL and apprenticeships. Social dialogue for the implementation of the institution in the Greek educational system”

In the first part presentations by political bodies and authorities will take place with institutional and operational role in issues concerning WBL and the apprenticeships implementation in Greece.

In parallel, other European apprenticeship models will be presented from foreign speakers.

• **Workshops:**

The second part will be constructed around three (3) workshops as follows:

1st Thematic workshop: "The implementation of apprenticeships in formal and non-formal education in Greece. Policies, practices and examples"

2nd Workshop: "The role of social partners in promoting and implementing WBL"

3rd Thematic workshop: "WBL and the relationship with the Higher Education. Experiences and Perspectives "

The participants in the conference will be Erasmus+ beneficiaries implementing projects adopting WBL practices, vocational education and training institutions, public organizations, universities and research centers, industry, workers' representatives and employers and all those being involved with these relating issues.

Greek and English will be the conference languages. There will be simultaneous translation.

Bibliography:

- Mind the gap: the threatened deficit of Europe in skills. The prognosis for future skills in Europe focuses on 2020, Cedefop briefing note, September 2008.
- PANORAMA Skill needs in Europe Focus on 2020, Cedefop Panorama series; 160 Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2008.
- From education to working life. The labour market outcomes of vocational education and training. Cedefop, Luxembourg Publications Office of the European Union, 2012.
- Good for Youth, Good for Business. European Alliance for Apprenticeships, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015.
- TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION POLICY. Investigation of connecting training with employment KANEP GSEE Writing team: Goulas, X. Zagou, X. Katsis A. Kokkinos, G. Kordatos, P. Boukouvalas, K. Palios, Z. Pandis, P. Fotopoulos, Editing Nikos Fotopoulos, Athens 2013
- Dual training system: The German "narrative" for linking education and labor market, Dr. Paidousi Chrysa, Director of Training, EIEAD 2014
- Websites: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/publications>