

Report on Transnational multiplier training carried out by AHK Bulgaria

Introduction:

As part of the worldwide network of 140 German foreign chambers in 92 countries the German-Bulgarian Chamber of Industry and Commerce - AHK Bulgarien engages in dual education and aims to contribute to its implementation, dissemination and sustainable development in the country as a coordinating and consulting organization between business and training institutions. Youth unemployment, migration and the lack of qualified working force are problems at national and European level. Through the model of dual vocational training, AHK Bulgarien gives young people in Bulgaria an opportunity for professional development in their home country and is trying to improve the quality of their professional knowledge through working in a real environment, including conducting quality internships, expanding apprenticeships and a dual training system.

Overview of the training:

The purpose of mentoring is to tap into the existing knowledge, skills, and experience of high performing employees and transfer these skills to newer or less experienced employees in order to advance their careers. The mentoring could turn out as one of the most important aspects in someone's career. Developing with the support of a mentor is very effective through the deeper interpersonal bonding. The workplace mentorship program has huge importance not only on the mentee but also on the whole organization.

Transnational training:

The transnational multiplier training workshop jointly conducted with all project partners was held on 02.09.2019 during the partners meeting in Varna. The training was carried out by AHK Bulgaria as leader of WP4 "Train the trainer course for industrial supervisors in dual higher education programs" with 12 participants.

The topic of the transnational multiplier workshop was "Mentoring - improving the smooth transition from the academic educational system to the workplace".

The aim of the training is:

- To understand the importance of the mentoring for the organization
- To understand the mentors' role and the responsibilities regarding the mentee

Content:

- Mentoring vs. Coaching and Training
- The role of the mentor
- The responsibilities of the mentor
- The mentoring process
- Psychological aspects

- Planning the mentees development and organizational value

In order to define and find ways for improving the smooth transition from the academic educational system to the workplace the participants worked in 3 groups on different topics:

- What can be improved in the formal educational system?
- What are the main challenges companies experience with fresh students coming from the university?
- How to ensure / trace / document the quality of implementation in practice?

After rotation every one of the participants could be part of each group and discuss all of the topics in different aspects. Below some of the outcomes:

What can be improved in the formal educational system?

- ✓ Missing people – number and quality;
- ✓ Communication what kind of skills are needed;
- ✓ Universities try to attract new students to the shortage specialties;
- ✓ Need for more practice;
- ✓ Universities do not have freedom to change specific number of hours;
- ✓ New approach / new platform – lectures on smart phone, virtual teachers / tutors;
- ✓ Teacher awareness of business needs;
- ✓ Teachers also need to go to universities;
- ✓ More involvement of teachers with the business;
- ✓ More flexibility – adaptable parts of curricula, free time for teachers for interaction with business;
- ✓ More attractive and interactive early-child education;
- ✓ Improve formal education system to save the business;
- ✓ Modern teaching methods – improve outdated methods;
- ✓ Stakeholder engagement – bottom-up approach;
- ✓ Using modern technology in teaching;
- ✓ Feedback from business;
- ✓ Involving companies in teaching courses, laboratory work etc.;
- ✓ More interaction between universities and business – flexibility is there to valorize inputs;
- ✓ Problems in terms of number of students;
- ✓ Ministries work slowly and business develops fast – lack of interest to change;
- ✓ No reforms on high education level;
- ✓ More pressure from business to policy-makers is needed;
- ✓ Quality of education depends on dialog between academia and business;

- ✓ Learning materials – more interactive and better linked to practice;
- ✓ Adopting curricula in dialog with business;
- ✓ Improvement of skills and qualification of teachers, promote further qualification of teachers (life-long learning in practice);
- ✓ Often the equipment used in the universities is outdated – more efficient funding schemes;
- ✓ Trainings initiated and organized by companies / in companies;
- ✓ High education system is over-regulated, people are not familiar with the education system and problems;
- ✓ Increase the role of business in education law creation;
- ✓ More social skills development as part of the formal curriculum.

What are the main challenges companies experience with fresh students coming from the university?

- ✓ No ability to work in teams;
- ✓ Lack of English;
- ✓ Lack of specific skills and practical experience;
- ✓ Lack of responsibility;
- ✓ Wrong expectations;
- ✓ No structured thinking;
- ✓ Lack of career counseling at universities;
- ✓ Communication issues;
- ✓ How to motivate the new generation;
- ✓ Difference of perspective expectations;
- ✓ Lack of empathy.

How to ensure / trace / document the quality of implementation in practice?

- ✓ Additional workshops with students / teachers / mentors on communication;
- ✓ “Practice documents” – students’ diary, technical info from school, objectives given by school/university;
- ✓ Reflection;
- ✓ Implementation of good-working platform – example given by HS Johanneum;
- ✓ Feedback.

Overall opinion after the training was that this topic combines very well the goal of the training in the dual educational system, the organizational needs and the interest of our participants and the discussion was very fruitful.

Participants:

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