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DI-VET

FOSTERING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN WORK-BASED
LEARNING FOR SMOOTHER VET-TO-WORK TRANSITION

Research report on the analysis of needs for inclusive Work-Based Learning in partner countries of the DI-VET project

Developed by the Diversity Hub Foundation team in cooperation with DI-VET project partners

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The report presents the results of research carried out as part of project „Fostering Diversity and Inclusion in Work-based Learning for Smoother VET-to-work Transition (DI-VET)“. The project is implemented within the Erasmus + program, action: KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training (KA220-VET). The project is being implemented from September 2024 to August 2026 by organizations from Sweden, Finland, Spain and Poland.

The aim of the project is:

- to provide vocational education and training (VET) professionals with practical tools and knowledge to enhance their competence and develop inclusive vocational education and training, assisting SMEs in implementing D&I strategies.
- to assist SMEs in addressing prejudices when working with diverse student groups, particularly those protected by anti discrimination laws, offering practical guidance on adjusting work environments and fostering inclusive Work-Based Learning (WBL).
- to formalize D&I in VET via certification based on micro credentials

The project will:

- Increase the capacity of VET professionals who will gain skills and tools to effectively organise inclusive learning in the workplace.
- Improve the practices of SMEs that will adopt more inclusive approaches, supporting diverse groups of learners in learning in the workplace.
- Formal recognition of competences in the field of diversity and inclusion will be achieved and certified through micro-qualifications in vocational education and training.





The aim of this research was to conduct a needs analysis to identify barriers and gaps for inclusive Work-Based Learning. The purpose of the interviews was to understand issues related to the recruitment, selection, and onboarding process of individuals from disadvantaged groups into Work-Based Learning in the partner countries (Sweden, Finland, Spain, and Poland). Through these interviews, it was possible to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to the organization and implementation of internships in companies that the target groups of the project face.

The study was qualitative in nature and involved conducting 60 in-depth individual interviews (IDI). Fifteen interviews were conducted in each country. The research participants represented:

- VET providers (both public and private). The representatives of VET had extensive experience in the vocational education sector, including academic lecturers, CEOs of training companies, NGO representatives involved in education and skills development, program directors, coordinators, mentors, and individuals directly responsible for WBL in VET institutions.
- Representatives of SMEs who had experience in hosting students for vocational training and internships.
- Students from disadvantaged groups, including representatives of national minorities, migrants, people of different religions, women, men, LGBTQ+ individuals, students from low-income backgrounds, people with disabilities, neuroatypical people, people from various age groups, and residents of rural areas.

The interviews were conducted based on pre-prepared interview scripts (separate for each target group) and were semi-structured. The interview scripts consisted of open-ended question blocks addressing predefined research problems. Additionally, follow-up questions were asked, and side topics emerging during the interview process were explored.

The interviews were conducted in various formats: online (using communication platforms and applications such as MS Teams, Google Meet, WhatsApp), via telephone, and face-to-face. The duration of individual interviews varied, ranging from 30 to 90 minutes.

Given that the study was qualitative—aimed at understanding Work-Based Learning issues in partner countries based on the subjective opinions of research participants—the results are not representative and cannot be extrapolated to the entire population of the respective partner countries.





Criteria for selecting internships

Polish students demonstrate the broadest spectrum of internship selection criteria. They consider both practical aspects such as salary, location, and schedule, as well as developmental aspects - the opportunity to gain experience and employment perspectives. For many, compliance with their field of study and personal interests is crucial. Some consciously choose less demanding placements, adapting them to their own limitations.

In Finland, students approach internship selection in a highly thoughtful manner, combining personal interests with long-term career development. Their priority is skill development opportunities, alignment with professional interests, and future employment prospects. They pay special attention to workplace atmosphere and development possibilities in specific areas such as customer service and accounting.

Swedish students face the most complex challenges. Their internship selection is often the result of compromises stemming from systemic constraints. Economic opportunities, access to appropriate offers, and the quality of proposed educational experience are decisive. They are frequently forced to accept available opportunities that do not fully correspond to their professional aspirations.

Students in Spain focus primarily on personal interests and skills development potential. A key factor is the possibility of employment after the internship. However, some students were assigned internship locations without considering their individual preferences, causing frustration and calls for a more transparent system.

A common denominator across all analyzed countries is the perception of internships not merely as an academic obligation, but as a strategic stage of professional development. Students treat them as a crucial moment to verify their skills, understand the job market, and build the foundations of their future career. Increasingly consciously and strategically approaching internship selection, they view them as an investment in their professional future. Their decisions are multidimensional, encompassing not only immediate educational benefits but also long-term development perspectives. Despite differences between countries, there is a visible common drive to maximize the opportunities offered by student internships. Simultaneously, the analysis reveals serious systemic challenges - from a lack of recruitment process transparency, through economic limitations, to offers misaligned with students' actual needs and capabilities.

Difficulties in finding and assigning internships

In Poland, students face a complex set of recruitment challenges. They emphasize the lack of response from recruiters and the phenomenon of ghost positions (fictitious job offers). The unrealistic employer requirements, such as full-time availability for day students, make the search particularly challenging. The recruitment process varies significantly in duration, from 2 weeks to 6 months. Students experience considerable stress during interviews and struggle with self-presentation and CV preparation. The limited number of positions combined with high student interest creates additional pressure. Some face extensive testing processes, including cognitive, skills, numerical reasoning, and cultural fit assessments. A notable issue is the recruiters' lack of preparation, often displaying unfamiliarity with candidates' CVs or job responsibilities. The logistical challenge of balancing internships with university classes further complicates the situation.

Finnish students point to a number of recurring challenges in their statements about their internship search. Language barriers proved to be the most significant obstacle, especially in terms of the required knowledge of Finnish and English. The internship search process is time-consuming and requires multiple applications, as evidenced by the experiences of six different students. Their testimonies indicate the systemic rather than individual nature of the problem. Some students focused on language barriers as the main challenge, while others pointed to general difficulties, highlighting the complexity and multifaceted nature of the obstacles encountered. Despite these challenges, the students' stories show that perseverance ultimately leads to finding a placement, although this requires considerable effort and determination.



Swedish students confronted a particularly challenging internship recruitment landscape. Their experience revealed an extremely inefficient system where 100-200 applications yielded only a 2.5% positive response rate. One student bluntly expressed their frustration: "*I applied for over 200 internships... I received like, five positive replies.*" The key challenges for Swedish students were deeply systemic. Name-based discrimination forced students to compromise their personal identity, with one student noting: "*People like to do business with someone similar to them.*" Networking proved highly selective, predominantly benefiting students perceived as outstanding, as highlighted by a supervisor's comment: "*We noticed that you are very motivated and want to improve as quickly as possible.*" Systemic recruitment challenges encompassed lack of awareness in companies, insufficient supporting tools, limited organizational resources, and inadequate diversity and inclusion competencies. The psychological impact was profound. Students experienced continuous emotional strain, multiple rejections, and a lack of constructive feedback, leading to systematic erosion of motivation and self-belief.

A complex picture of systemic and organisational challenges emerges from the statements of Spanish students. The selection process is highly polarised - while some students go through it smoothly thanks to institutional support, others face significant difficulties. The main organisational problems include conflicts with existing work schedules, a lack of suitable placement companies and very late notifications of placement allocations (as little as 1-2 days before the start), which in some cases forces students to wait a year for another opportunity. Deeper problems emerge at a systemic level. Students perceive a clear bias on the part of companies, especially regarding age and outward appearance. Although education centres try to treat everyone equally, support for students with special needs often falls short. Particularly worrying is the lack of preparedness of companies to train trainees, which, combined with outdated vocational education programmes that are not adapted to current labour market requirements, creates a serious barrier to gaining valuable work experience.

Analysis of all countries indicates systemic problems in the organization of student internships in Europe. Despite differences in the specifics of particular difficulties, there is a common pattern of ineffective student-employer communication, requirements misaligned with student capabilities, and lack of appropriate institutional support. Particularly concerning is the fact that regardless of the country, students are often forced to rely on informal support networks, which may deepen inequalities in access to valuable internship opportunities.

Experiences During Internships

Polish students overwhelmingly evaluated their internships positively, emphasizing the value of practical experiences, skill development, and personal growth. One student shared: "*Getting out of my comfort zone, mastering situations that I thought I couldn't manage, but in the end I managed without any problems.*" However, they also noted some challenges, such as lack of clear career paths and periods of less intense work.

Finnish students highlighted the importance of language acquisition and cultural adaptation during their internships. While internships helped improve their Finnish language skills, they also presented communication challenges. Physical and operational difficulties were reported, ranging from health issues due to heavy lifting to task comprehension and monotony. The experiences underscored both the positive learning aspects and potential concerns regarding work conditions and task variety.

Swedish students faced a concerning dynamic of unpaid internships, where student labor was often exploited, and economic inequality affected internship accessibility. As one student pointedly noted, unpaid internships create "*a double burden for certain people in certain economic situations,*" favoring students from privileged backgrounds. The quality of internship experiences was also a significant issue, with students reporting limited learning opportunities, inappropriate levels of responsibility, and lack of proper guidance. However, the testimonials also highlighted the significance of securing that first work experience, which created a powerful approval stamp effect in the job market. One student's experience demonstrated how their CV value increased by "200%" after their first internship.



Spanish students reported varied experiences. Some described their internships as positive, emphasizing the opportunity to apply classroom learning, acquire new skills, and understand real workplace dynamics. Others had negative experiences, feeling that companies did not assign meaningful tasks or provide proper supervision. In some cases, internships were merely a formal requirement without a structured training plan.

The analysis of students' internship experiences in Poland, Finland, Sweden, and Spain reveals a complex picture of work-based learning systems in Europe. Despite differences between countries, students face similar challenges, such as exploitation, economic inequalities, and varying quality of educational experiences. A common thread is the importance of gaining the first professional experience, which can have a crucial impact on future employment prospects. At the same time, students emphasize the need for better support in the application process and more structured internship programs. The analysis indicates an urgent need for systemic reforms that will ensure fair compensation, equal access, and high-quality learning opportunities for all interns.

Completion and satisfaction with internships

Polish students approach internships extremely positively, viewing them as a crucial moment in shaping their professional trajectory. For many, they are not just an opportunity to gain first-hand experience, but a breakthrough decision-making point - some even decide to continue their master's studies in the same field or take their first job in the organization they've discovered. Practical experience allows them to verify theoretical knowledge, develop professional skills, and gain confidence in their career choices.

In Finland, internships are perceived as an extremely effective career path, where the key focus is not solely on employment opportunities, but on comprehensive personal and professional development. Students demonstrate high levels of satisfaction, primarily appreciating the chance to acquire real-world skills and market experience. A notable pattern emerges where many internships led to job offers, though with varying results: some students secured and accepted positions, others chose to decline offers, and in some cases, organizational constraints prevented potential employment despite positive performance. Students consistently express high levels of personal satisfaction, viewing internships as valuable experiences that fulfill both educational and professional development goals.

Swedish internship experiences take on an almost therapeutic dimension - students treat them as a process of personal and professional transformation. Psychological resilience becomes crucial, along with the ability to break through systemic barriers and function in a demanding professional environment. For some, the first professional experience acts as a career catalyst, dramatically changing the perception of their potential in the job market. The experience involves overcoming complex recruitment challenges, managing repeated rejections, and maintaining motivation in challenging environments.

The situation in Spain is entirely different, with student experiences being strongly polarized. While all students completed their internships, many did so only to meet graduation requirements. For some, internships represented a valuable developmental stage, while for others, they were merely a mandatory requirement devoid of genuine substantive value. The lack of employment opportunities and insufficient mentoring support often led to frustration and demotivation. Many students found no subsequent job opportunities, with companies typically having no available positions, which in the most negative cases led to doubts about their chosen field of study.



Regardless of national differences, internships are no longer perceived as merely an academic obligation across all countries. They become a strategic investment in the future, a tool for professional and personal self-definition. Students treat them as a critical moment to verify their skills, capabilities, and professional aspirations. The common denominator is recognizing the value of direct experience - the opportunity to test theoretical knowledge in practice, establish first professional relationships, and understand workplace dynamics. Although details vary by country, the fundamental motivation remains the same - the desire to transform from a student into a professional. It is also crucial to understand that satisfaction from internships extends far beyond employment opportunities. Often, the intangible benefits are much more important: increased self-confidence, better understanding of personal potential and limitations, and acquiring soft skills that pay dividends throughout one's professional life.

Tools used in the practice search

In Poland, students demonstrate the most diverse approach, combining traditional recruitment platforms like Joodle and Pracuj.pl with modern tools such as Facebook groups and employee review websites. Personal contacts and recommendations from friends always play a crucial role.

Finnish students appear most dependent on the university system, where internships are almost automatically allocated by educational institutions. Their strategy relies primarily on trusting institutional support mechanisms, with minimal personal intervention in the selection process.

The situation in Sweden is entirely different, with students treating internship searches like a complex business strategy. Sending between 100 to 200 precisely tailored applications, they leverage LinkedIn, internal university networks, and most importantly, their own networking potential. Recommendations from colleagues and lecturers often become the key to success.

Spanish students balance between systemic constraints and personal initiative. Although often automatically assigned to internship locations, the more entrepreneurial actively seek opportunities aligned with their professional interests.

Despite national differences, one common pattern emerges across all countries: informal contact networks and personal initiative increasingly outweigh formal recruitment methods. Success in finding internships less frequently depends on official procedures and more on the ability to build relationships and actively pursue opportunities. The digital age has transformed internship hunting from a bureaucratic process to a strategic personal branding exercise, where networking, digital literacy, and proactive approach determine success far more than traditional application methods.

Support during the internship search

In Poland, support during internship search is irregular and often insufficient. Despite universities' declared cooperation with organizations, institutional support is limited to basic formalities - sending informative emails and providing lists of potential employers. In practice, students rely mainly on informal support (family, friends, senior students), while practice supervisors offer only minimal email support. Some students receive concrete help through employer referrals, while others remain without any support. The university system serves only as a marginal source of assistance in the internship search process.



In Finland, informal support networks dominate the process, with three main sources of assistance: school friends sharing opportunities, personal friends helping with connections, and family members. There is notably absent institutional support, with success in finding internships heavily dependent on personal networks.

In Sweden, students receive basic institutional support through job search and CV creation classes. However, there is a lack of deeper support and constructive feedback from employers. Students experience significant stress during the application process, particularly when balancing applications with studies, and some deliberately choose to search independently without requesting assistance.

The Spanish system follows a dual approach, where some students receive institutional support while others are directly assigned placements by educational centers without consideration of their individual preferences.

Analysis across all countries reveals several key trends. There is a visible lack of systematic institutional support, while informal support networks play a dominant role. Basic formal support, such as CV classes or employer lists, proves inadequate for real-world challenges. Students often must manage their internship search independently, with significant variations in experiences even within the same institution. The lack of effective feedback from employers is a universal problem, and the current support system requires better adaptation to students' practical needs across all studied countries.

Future career plans and the possibility of repeating the experience

In Poland, students point to concrete results: some have been offered permanent employment, some have received contract extensions, and some are planning to pursue graduate studies in the same field.

Finnish students are considering a variety of career paths: from self-employment, to employment with existing internship employers, to exploring alternative career paths.

In Sweden, students indicate a natural progression from WBL through seasonal work to part-time employment.

Spanish students make their willingness to take on another internship contingent on previous experience - those with positive ones want to repeat it, while students with negative ones would only consider it with the guarantee of a structured training program.

In conclusion, in all countries the internship influences students' specific career plans, but their direction depends on the quality of the internship and the development opportunities received during it.





Approach to Inclusion in WBL

In Poland, there is a flexible and individualized approach to recruiting interns, which is reflected in the use of various recruitment strategies - from online advertisements to direct recommendations. Companies focus on candidates' potential, willingness to learn, and interest in the industry, going beyond formal qualifications. Of particular note is the innovative approach to people with disabilities in one of the surveyed companies, as exemplified by the employer's statement: *"we had an employee with high-functioning autism who was great at working on the computer, and we have also hired people with physical disabilities"*. Additionally, companies invest in intern development through training and integration activities, treating internships as a strategic investment in future employees.

In the Finnish market, the strategy of selecting interns focuses on attracting young, motivated individuals with diverse skills. The recruitment process places particular emphasis on cultural competencies, social skills, and flexibility. Entrepreneurs value above all the willingness to learn and independence of candidates, recognizing knowledge of Finnish as an additional asset. A characteristic element of the Finnish approach is a collaboration model based on mutual learning, which creates a valuable platform for exchanging experiences between the educational and business sectors.

Small and medium-sized companies in Sweden use team-based recruiting methods, where *"they don't focus on age, gender, or background, and actively seek interns from diverse groups because this enriches the workplace."* These organizations involve multiple employees as early as the ad creation stage as this allows them to better identify the actual needs competence-wise and to apply diverse lenses to the recruitment process. This inclusive approach continues throughout the entire employee journey, starting with organizational culture that places strong emphasis on ethical values such as honesty, respect and empathy. Building on these foundations, the induction process for new trainees includes comprehensive cultural sensitivity training and regular updates on diversity and inclusion. These companies emphasize that *"they focus on identifying potential. Someone might not have a formal degree or fluency in Swedish, but they could still be an exceptional trainer or bring unique perspectives. This approach isn't just part of their mission—it's their business model."* To sustain this inclusive environment long-term, special initiatives are implemented, including mentoring programs that take into account cultural diversity and proactive measures to counter stereotypes and prejudices.

The essence of Spanish enterprises' activities lies in actively counteracting gender disparities through constructing appropriately targeted job offers and consistently eliminating existing stereotypes. An important element of the Spanish approach is establishing partnerships with organizations operating in excluded communities, which effectively facilitates access to employment for students from these groups. Although not all companies are fully prepared to implement comprehensive inclusive programs, there is a visible effort to flexibly adapt professional practices to provide students with valuable professional experience.

Companies increasingly embrace flexible recruitment approaches that actively seek diversity, moving beyond traditional qualifications to focus on candidates' potential, motivation. Organizations are developing comprehensive inclusion strategies, from building workplace cultures based on respect and empathy to training and mentoring programs. These internship programs are viewed as strategic investments in future talent, with companies taking proactive steps to create sustainable, inclusive environments that counter stereotypes and prejudices. This evolution in workplace learning not only promotes social inclusion but also helps build more competitive organizations enriched by diverse perspectives.



Experience with WBL

Poland reveals a clear dualism in the effectiveness of internships, where the key differentiating factor is the source of trainee recruitment. Problems with institutionally directed individuals contrast sharply with the high effectiveness of internships initiated independently by candidates, highlighting the importance of internal motivation in practical training.

Experiences with work-based learning in Finnish SMEs demonstrate a highly structured yet flexible approach to workplace education. The learning process is built on a foundation of clear educational objectives and comprehensive mentoring support, where interns actively engage in practical problem-solving across various situations. A key characteristic is the emphasis on independence combined with readily available guidance - interns are encouraged to work autonomously while having access to mentor support when needed. The learning environment is enriched by deliberate exposure to different departments and colleagues, fostering a broad understanding of organizational operations. What makes this approach particularly effective is its focus on two-way communication, where interns are not just passive learners but active participants encouraged to propose ideas and express their thoughts openly. The success of this model lies in the careful balance between structured support and independent learning, all while maintaining high standards of practical education.

Swedish experiences with WBL programs focus primarily on the process of working with trainees. In daily practice, businesses observe high effectiveness of the mentoring system based on regular meetings and flexible access to support. Positive experiences are particularly associated with internships that begin with clear definition of mutual expectations and cooperation goals. Companies report good results when trainees are actively included in team life and have influence even on daily aspects of office operations, which translates into their greater engagement.

The Spanish experience with WBL demonstrates a distinct focus on social integration, with varying levels of implementation across companies. Some organizations have achieved notable success, particularly in programs transforming foster care participants into mentors through sustained mentoring and cross-sector partnerships. While certain companies actively maintain open WBL opportunities for all students, others face resource constraints that limit their ability to implement comprehensive programs.

Successful workplace learning consistently relies on comprehensive mentoring systems with regular support mechanisms. Programs achieve better results when mutual expectations are clearly defined from the start. The effectiveness significantly increases when trainees are actively involved in real company operations rather than isolated training tasks. Maintaining a balance between structured guidance and independent work opportunities emerges as a key element in effective workplace learning programs.

Barriers and challenges in WBL

Poland's main challenges in WBL programs center on motivation and communication issues with trainees. Companies predominantly report problems with lack of engagement, laziness, and insufficient work motivation, often manifested through lateness and absenteeism. While companies lack formalized conflict resolution procedures, preferring direct and flexible approaches through personal contact with owners or immediate supervisors, they note that such issues rarely occur among carefully selected long-term trainees. Organizations employ various preventive measures, from regular communication and detailed discussions to formal induction training, with particular emphasis on the initial cooperation phase. Companies acknowledge a significant gap between candidates' expectations and the realities of working in small businesses.



Finnish companies experience relatively few challenges in implementing WBL programs. In the context of recruitment, most companies report no problems, describing the process as “smooth” or “good.” Two companies indicate potential challenges related to language barriers and cultural differences, but do not present them as significant obstacles to program implementation. In terms of the workplace learning process itself, companies report no significant problems.

SMEs in Sweden face three main challenge areas in implementing WBL programs. Language barriers emerge as a significant issue, limiting employment opportunities and requiring continuous adaptation of communication methods to different language proficiency levels. Cultural challenges manifest through stereotypical thinking and unconscious biases, requiring ongoing work on cultural awareness within organizations. Systemic limitations present another obstacle, particularly evident in the lack of an extensive network of organizations accepting interns and insufficient tools for connecting companies with potential trainees.

Spanish companies face distinct sectoral challenges in their WBL programs, particularly regarding gender inequalities in specific industries, such as recreation and animation, where women dominate due to traditional social roles. This imbalance perpetuates existing stereotypes among younger generations. Additionally, while some organizations have initiated programs to integrate socially excluded youth through accessible training and internships with employment commitments, inadequate or poorly managed funding raises concerns about exploitation. The limited duration of internships presents another significant challenge, compromising the ability to provide comprehensive educational experiences.

The primary issues center around trainee engagement and motivation, particularly evident in environments without structured internship frameworks. Language barriers and cultural differences emerge as universal challenges, requiring companies to continuously adapt their communication methods and work on cultural awareness. Gender-based inequalities persist in specific sectors, perpetuating traditional stereotypes. The gap between trainee expectations and workplace realities presents an ongoing challenge, especially in smaller businesses.

Support needs for D&I in WBL

Polish companies demonstrate the need for better tools to verify competencies and predispositions of candidates during the recruitment stage. This could potentially help eliminate unconscious biases and ensure equal opportunities for all candidates, regardless of their background.

Finnish organizations have identified several essential elements for effective workplace learning, primarily focusing on the need for clear guidance and comprehensive support systems. First and foremost, they highlight the importance of regular meetings with designated mentors who help establish and track clear objectives. In parallel, they stress the value of providing constructive feedback sessions to support trainee development and growth. Communication plays a vital role, with organizations emphasizing the need for smooth information flow between traineeship supervisors and trainees. Another key aspect is ensuring that training materials and objectives are clearly defined, including specific assessment criteria. Finally, they underscore the importance of coaching that helps trainees develop a realistic view of their future career prospects.

Swedish small and medium-sized enterprises indicate specific support needs in implementing WBL programs. A key postulate is creating a broader network of organizations that could regularly accept trainees. Entrepreneurs also emphasize the need to create a dedicated platform or database of companies ready to accept trainees for various periods.



Spanish organizations identify several key support needs for inclusive WBL programs. Financial support, even minimal, is highlighted as a crucial factor for improving inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged backgrounds, alongside needs for environmental adaptations, audiovisual materials, educational resources, and technical support tools.

Organizations seek enhanced tools for competency assessment and trainee-company matching to ensure objective candidate evaluation. Companies emphasize the importance of comprehensive mentoring frameworks incorporating regular guidance, clear objectives, and structured feedback systems. There's also a clear need for improved WBL infrastructure, including expanded networks of participating organizations and platforms connecting trainees with businesses. Additionally, organizations identify financial and technical support as crucial elements for ensuring program accessibility, particularly for disadvantaged groups.





Recruitment, selection, and integration of disadvantaged groups into Work-Based Learning in partner countries

The recruitment, selection, and onboarding of individuals from disadvantaged groups into Work-Based Learning (WBL) programs present significant challenges across various countries. A key issue is the lack of a systematic approach—most nations do not have structured strategies in place, leading to reactive rather than proactive actions. The process often depends on individual initiatives rather than comprehensive policies, making it inconsistent and less effective.

One of the most crucial factors influencing the success of disadvantaged individuals in WBL is their access to professional networks. In countries like Sweden and Finland, it has been observed that such individuals often struggle to establish industry connections, significantly reducing their chances of securing internships. Furthermore, language proficiency and cultural norms create additional barriers. In these countries, limited knowledge of the national language and unfamiliarity with workplace customs can result in discrimination and make adaptation more difficult.

Employers play a vital role in the success of WBL programs, yet they frequently do not engage actively in the process. Instead, the responsibility for placing students in internships is often left to educational institutions. This lack of employer initiative limits opportunities for disadvantaged individuals, making it harder for them to enter the job market. To address these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the need for individualized support systems, including mentoring programs, additional training, and assistance in establishing employer connections.

In Poland, as stated by the interviews participants, the recruitment process is based on an equality-driven approach, where all candidates are treated the same regardless of their background. It was emphasized that among the criteria for recruitment and selection of candidates, the most important is the compliance of the candidate's qualifications with the requirements presented in the offer, the student's experience gained outside the university, communication skills, motivation for personal training and scientific and professional development. Belonging to disadvantaged groups does not matter. While this ensures fairness in theory, it can lead to the unintentional marginalization of disadvantaged individuals who may require additional support. There is no proactive effort to recruit from these groups, and although employers show some openness to adapting work environments to individual needs, systemic solutions remain absent. Developing structured inclusion strategies could improve access to WBL for these candidates.

Spain presents a different scenario, where internships are mandatory, and selection processes are minimal. While this guarantees access to WBL, it does not ensure that disadvantaged individuals receive adequate support. Some educational institutions attempt to balance skills within internship groups to optimize learning outcomes. Additionally, a strong emphasis is placed on preparing students for internships, ensuring they understand the value of WBL in shaping their future careers.

In Sweden, the absence of professional networks is a significant hurdle for disadvantaged groups seeking internships. Many students also lack sufficient knowledge of the job market, as educational programs do not always align with industry demands. Additionally, hidden discrimination remains an issue, with unconscious biases affecting recruitment processes. Employers rarely take the initiative in hiring interns, placing the burden on educational institutions to secure internship opportunities. Introducing structured mentoring programs and workshops could help students from disadvantaged backgrounds navigate these challenges more effectively.



“Social skills, honestly, something that lacks a lot. I would say in Sweden, I myself am not Swedish, so I know I'm bit biased in that perspective, but socializing is very needed in any any job where you can talk to people, you need to learn how to introduce yourself and talk so this is a good opportunity for students to learn how to network in their in their future careers and their future paths and meet more people” (VET from Sweden)

Finland faces similar difficulties, with language barriers posing a significant obstacle to securing internships and employment. Many international candidates rely on personal networks to find internships, highlighting the need for institutional support. Additionally, candidates often require help with preparing CVs and cover letters, as well as navigating application procedures that vary across different institutions. The limited availability of internship placements in certain sectors further complicates the situation, emphasizing the need for greater employer involvement. Flexible solutions, such as intensive language courses, mentoring programs, and information platforms, could facilitate the recruitment and adaptation process for disadvantaged individuals.

The challenges associated with recruiting, selecting, and onboarding disadvantaged individuals into WBL programs vary by country, but several common obstacles emerge. The lack of systemic solutions, low employer engagement, restricted access to professional networks, and language and cultural barriers all hinder the effectiveness of these programs. To improve access and success rates, key measures should include the creation of public databases of employers interested in WBL, the introduction of mentoring initiatives, stronger collaboration between educational institutions and businesses, and the implementation of transparent recruitment procedures to counteract hidden discrimination. By addressing these issues, WBL programs can become more inclusive, providing disadvantaged individuals with better opportunities for professional success.

Potential causes of mistakes and inappropriate behaviour towards disadvantaged groups in the workplace and at school

The people who participated in the interviews admitted that in their opinion the reasons for mistakes and inappropriate behaviour towards disadvantaged groups in the workplace and at school include, among others, the lack of knowledge in society about the potential of people from disadvantaged groups, as well as social stereotypes. Attention was also drawn to people's own frustrations and complexes, which they cannot cope with and therefore treat people from disadvantaged groups in a negative way. Respondents also pointed to a low level of emotional sensitivity, combined with the schematism of action in the academic environment.

„In general, most negative behaviors towards people from disadvantaged groups result from stereotypical perceptions of certain features, which are intensified by ignorance of the subject, lack of previous contact with such people. Against this background, fear of something we do not know arises, we do not know how to behave in contact with such a person or we stereotypically assume that they do not know something, are worse at something, will not cope in a given position” (VET from Poland)

Positive and negative examples of recruitment, selection, and integration of disadvantaged groups into Work-Based Learning

In analyzing the recruitment, selection, and integration of disadvantaged groups into work-based learning across four countries—Sweden, Finland, Poland, and Spain—we can identify several key positive and negative examples. These reflect the challenges and opportunities present in the systems for engaging individuals from marginalized groups, including those with disabilities, cultural differences, or other disadvantages, in vocational training and employment.



In Poland, as mentioned during interviews, there have been successful cases where work-based learning has been applied to individuals with neurodivergence, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and schizophrenia. These students have shown high levels of motivation and engagement, with many securing permanent employment after completing their studies. However, there have been negative experiences in the integration of people with disabilities and mental health issues into the workplace. Despite adjustments being made, some individuals struggled with the pace and multitasking required by the job, and there were also cases where employees took advantage of their disability status to demand privileges that were not aligned with equal treatment in the workplace. Additionally, there are stories of older employees resisting knowledge-sharing with younger colleagues, creating a less collaborative environment.

Spain also presents a mix of positive and negative examples. On the positive side, there is a strong emphasis on preparing students before their placements, helping them understand the importance of their WBL experience for their career development. Support systems during internships are also well-established, with regular monitoring and guidance from both VET institutions and employers, ensuring students receive the necessary support. Furthermore, there is a growing focus on soft skills training, with programs that help students develop essential skills such as communication, time management, and workplace adaptation. However, Spain faces several challenges. The selection process for internships is sometimes minimal or even non-existent, particularly when placements are mandatory, leading to mismatched placements. Language barriers and cultural differences are also significant issues that hinder the full participation of disadvantaged students in the workplace. Additionally, many students struggle with basic soft skills and lack the necessary preparation for business culture, which can make it difficult for them to succeed. The absence of updated digital tools for managing WBL placements further exacerbates the inefficiency of the process.

In Sweden, there are notable positive efforts where vocational education and training (VET) providers take personal initiatives to connect students with companies. These initiatives include proactive networking and direct engagement with employers, ensuring that even those facing barriers such as language and cultural differences receive opportunities for internships. Mentoring, especially for those from immigrant backgrounds, is also a strength, with educators going beyond the traditional roles to help students navigate these challenges. However, there are significant negative examples, including the lack of employer engagement in internship programs. Despite the relatively low cost for employers, many need substantial persuasion to participate, and bias or discrimination, particularly against students with non-Swedish backgrounds, further limits opportunities. The lack of networking skills among students and the insufficient alignment of training programs with labor market needs are also challenges that hinder the integration of disadvantaged groups into work-based learning.

In Finland, positive examples include the provision of personalized support for students, particularly those from multicultural backgrounds. Teachers assist students with CV writing, interview preparation, and understanding job requirements. The country also benefits from collaboration with companies that are open to hosting multicultural interns, organizing job fairs and other networking events to connect students with potential employers. However, there are significant barriers as well. The most prevalent issue is the language barrier, with insufficient proficiency in Finnish often limiting students' access to suitable internship opportunities. Additionally, challenges in adapting to the Finnish work culture, coupled with a lack of initiative from some students, hinder integration into the workforce. Some students also face difficulties in obtaining responses from companies, which makes the recruitment process even more challenging.

„As a teacher, I offer personalised guidance to students in the lessons I reserve for this purpose. To help students to write good CVs, BC Futura offers clinics to develop and polish students' CVs. I understand that CV writing is also taught and practised in Finnish language lessons“. (VET from Finland)



Across these countries, several common themes emerge. Positive practices such as personalized support, proactive engagement with companies, and the provision of mentoring can make a significant difference in the success of disadvantaged students in work-based learning programs. However, there are also systemic issues, including insufficient employer engagement, language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and the lack of adequate preparation in soft skills. Additionally, the absence of streamlined digital tools and resources for managing WBL placements is a recurring challenge that hinders the effectiveness of these programs.

Overall, while the efforts in Sweden, Finland, Poland, and Spain to integrate disadvantaged groups into work-based learning are commendable, significant improvements are needed in terms of employer involvement, tailored support for students with diverse needs, and the development of more inclusive and efficient systems. The key to success lies in fostering better communication between educational institutions, employers, and students, as well as ensuring that the necessary resources, training, and support systems are in place to help all students, regardless of their background, succeed in the labor market.

Needs for tools to support the recruitment, selection, and integration of disadvantaged groups into Work-Based Learning

Analyzing the needs for tools to support the recruitment, selection, and integration of disadvantaged groups into Work-Based Learning in different countries, both common challenges and specific needs depending on local conditions can be observed.

In Poland, the main challenges are difficulties in reaching out to disadvantaged groups and the lack of tools to monitor participants' progress. Some respondents emphasized that in Poland we rarely consciously approach the introduction of interns to work positions and their integration with other employees. People on internships are often left to their own devices, having to complete very simple tasks. It is noteworthy that some interviewees do not feel the lack of tools, indicating that their knowledge in this area is sufficient. However, problems with managing mentors' time and effective recruitment persist. There is, therefore, a need for support in terms of strategies for reaching candidates and tools for effectively monitoring their progress and engaging mentors.

In Spain, the key need is the development of digital tools to support the recruitment and selection process. In this case, it is particularly important to have up-to-date databases of collaborating companies and specialized platforms that could support the search for appropriate internship placements. A proposed solution is to use artificial intelligence to optimize the selection process and monitor participants' progress. Spanish experts also point to the need for a central platform, potentially managed by educational or government institutions, to streamline the entire process. Support during internships varies depending on the educational center and the company. While some VET providers actively accompany students through tutoring and periodic visits, others feel that most of the supervision is left to the company tutor. Some mention that, in certain cases, the guidance and monitoring provided are insufficient, which can hinder students' integration into the workplace. To improve this situation, they suggest strengthening communication between VET centers, companies, and students by implementing progress reports and regular meetings.

In Sweden, there is an urgent need for access to networks and employer databases, which significantly hinders the recruitment of disadvantaged, especially international, individuals. Students face difficulties in establishing contacts with employers, which highlights the need for training in professional relationship-building. Additionally, there is insufficient communication between schools and companies, resulting in a mismatch between the educational offer and the actual needs of the labor market. The lack of employer involvement in internship programs and insufficient funding for diversity and inclusion initiatives further exacerbates the problem. Therefore, it is crucial to develop tools that support both students and employers, including access to networks, better communication, and the elimination of language barriers.



Finland points to the need for support in language training, as proficiency in Finnish is critical in the recruitment process. Additionally, there is a need to build collaboration networks with local companies and organizations that are open to accepting students from diverse cultures. The lack of clear tools for monitoring progress and supporting teachers in preparing CVs and conducting job interviews is also highlighted. Furthermore, simplifying recruitment procedures and developing platforms to support internship search, as well as offering additional forms of counseling, could better prepare students for the job market.

In summary, the needs for tools to support recruitment, selection, and integration of disadvantaged groups into Work-Based Learning vary across countries but share common elements. In Poland and Sweden, tools for better monitoring progress and support in building relationships with employers are needed. In Spain, the development of digital platforms to support selection and recruitment is necessary, while in Finland, improving language training and collaboration with companies is crucial. All these aspects highlight the need for greater involvement of technology, better communication between schools and companies, and the development of social skills among participants.

VET training needs in the recruitment, selection and integration of people from disadvantaged groups in Work-Based Learning

Vocational Education and Training providers across Spain, Poland, Finland, and Sweden have identified key areas for enhancing their competencies in recruiting, selecting, and integrating disadvantaged groups into work-based learning. These needs are essential for creating more inclusive and effective systems that allow students from various backgrounds, including those facing language barriers, cultural differences, and socio-economic challenges, to succeed in the workforce.

In Poland, the challenge lies in creating an inclusive environment for disadvantaged groups, particularly by overcoming societal prejudices. VET providers need to understand the potential of these individuals and build stronger relationships within academic and workplace communities. There is a need for better knowledge of disabilities, cultural differences, and the specific needs of Generation Z. Additionally, VET providers seek guidance on managing the WBL process, building inclusive work environments, overcoming team biases, and resolving conflicts related to diversity. Addressing these challenges will help ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can thrive in WBL settings and contribute to more inclusive workplaces.

In Spain, VET providers are focused on strengthening support systems during internships, as some institutions feel that the responsibility for monitoring students' progress falls too heavily on the companies themselves. Improved communication between VET centers, students, and employers, along with more frequent check-ins, is seen as crucial. Additionally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of soft skills training, particularly in communication, time management, and workplace behavior, to better prepare students for WBL. Addressing cultural and language barriers is another priority, with a call for greater awareness and training on diversity and inclusion, as well as better use of international certifications like ESCO to connect WBL to recognized standards.

In Sweden, the emphasis is on improving employer engagement, particularly with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to offer more work-based learning opportunities for disadvantaged students. The lack of a structured database for potential employers and low employer willingness to engage in internships are key challenges. Additionally, VET providers must support students in developing social skills and confidence, particularly those from non-Swedish backgrounds, and help them overcome language and cultural barriers in the workplace. The need to address hidden discrimination in recruitment and ensure that students are evaluated based on skills, not ethnicity, is also highlighted. VET providers are encouraged to foster corporate social responsibility (CSR) in companies, emphasizing the role of internships in developing young talent and promoting diversity.



Finland's focus is on enhancing language skills and cultural awareness to help students from immigrant backgrounds navigate Finnish work culture and secure internships. VET providers stress the importance of assessing language proficiency early in the process and offering additional support, such as language courses and networks like MAVA training. Teachers also emphasize the need to improve guidance, helping students with job applications, interviews, and CV creation. Furthermore, collaboration with local businesses is seen as essential to expanding internship opportunities and creating smoother recruitment processes for disadvantaged students. Finally, there is a call for fostering greater self-initiative among students to overcome challenges during the job search.

In conclusion, VET providers across these four countries share a common goal of improving support systems for disadvantaged students in work-based learning. By addressing language barriers, improving cultural understanding, enhancing soft skills, and strengthening relationships with employers, VET providers can help students from diverse backgrounds succeed in the workplace and contribute to a more inclusive labor market.

Suggestions from VET representatives on how to improve the recruitment, selection and integration of people from disadvantaged groups in Work-Based Learning

- broadly understood education, including organizing thematic workshops that address and characterize the problems of disadvantaged people,
- personal contacts with people from disadvantaged groups that build our experience and allow us to form our own opinions,
- showing good practices from various learning and work environments,
- entrusting management positions to people with high social sensitivity,
- modifying the education model, including reducing the number of task, educational and training groups,
- profiling students' career paths by establishing more in-depth cooperation with them (also of a task-based nature, but non-academic),
- creating an inter-institutional network that allows for horizontal promotion of employees (people from disadvantaged groups often give up personal development in new places due to fears that they will lose the position they have gained in their current place.
- categorical corrective reactions from superiors
- developing and implementing procedures for reporting situations that bear signs of discrimination in places where work-based learning

"The most effective change is brought about by experience and contact with a person from a disadvantaged group - then there is an opportunity to examine their skills first-hand and verify your beliefs and prejudices. Working with a person from a minority group, we become familiar with them, and on this basis, we build acceptance for their different features (understanding that different does not mean worse). All forms of work that involve cooperation with such a person bring long-term benefits - much more lasting than training, or even more so than awareness sessions." (VET from Poland)





Key Findings on Student Internship Experiences

Students' experiences with internships reveal that **they treat internships as a strategic element of professional development**, extending beyond a mere academic obligation. When choosing internships, students are guided by complex criteria, combining **practical aspects** (salary, location, schedule) with **developmental ones** (opportunity to gain experience, employment prospects). For many, the **alignment of internships with their field of study and personal interests** is of key importance.

The process of searching for and obtaining internships is burdened with **significant systemic difficulties**. Students encounter a lack of response from recruiters, unrealistic employer requirements, and stress during interviews. The challenge is to balance internships with university classes and overcome various structural barriers. The recruitment process is often **time-consuming and frustrating**, with a low rate of positive responses.

The quality of practical experiences varies greatly depending on the country and specific organization. **Valuable internships** provide **skill development**, verification of theoretical knowledge, and increased self-confidence. Problematic aspects include **unpaid internships**, which deepen economic inequalities, and **lack of adequate mentoring**. Regardless of these differences, most students see internships as having **significant value for their future careers**. The first internship often significantly **increases a candidate's attractiveness** in the job market.

Satisfaction with internships goes **beyond employment prospects**. Students appreciate **increased self-confidence**, better understanding of their own potential, and acquisition of interpersonal skills. Internships often become a **turning point** in decisions about further education or career path, enabling **transformation from a student role to a professional one**.

In the process of searching for internships, an **evolution of tools and methods** used is observed. Students combine traditional recruitment platforms with modern tools, such as social media and professional groups. **Informal networks** of contacts and **personal initiative** are becoming increasingly important. The search for internships is transforming from a bureaucratic process into **strategic personal branding**.

A significant problem remains the **insufficient institutional support** during the search for internships. The dominant role belongs to **informal support networks**. Basic formal support proves **inadequate** in the face of real recruitment challenges. A universal problem is the **lack of constructive feedback from employers**.

Experiences from internships **directly affect students' future career plans**. The quality of internships often determines the willingness to remain in a given field or to seek alternative career paths. **Positive experiences** lead to offers of **permanent employment** or continuation of education in the same direction. For students, the value of internships is measured not only by employment prospects but also by **overall personal and professional development**.

Key Findings on SME Internship Experiences



The experiences of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with internships reveal that **companies increasingly use flexible recruitment approaches**, actively seeking diversity and going beyond traditional qualifications to focus on **candidates' potential and motivation**. Businesses concentrate on willingness to learn, interest in the industry, and social skills, not just formal education.

In implementing internship programs, a **comprehensive mentoring system** with regular support mechanisms is of key importance. Programs achieve better results when **mutual expectations are clearly defined from the start**. Effectiveness significantly increases when trainees are **actively involved in real company operations** rather than isolated training tasks. Maintaining a balance between **structured guidance and independent work opportunities** emerges as a key element in effective workplace learning programs.

The main challenges in internship programs center around **trainee engagement and motivation**, particularly evident in environments without structured internship frameworks. **Language barriers and cultural differences** emerge as universal challenges, requiring companies to continuously adapt their communication methods and work on cultural awareness. **Gender-based inequalities** persist in specific sectors, perpetuating traditional stereotypes. The **gap between trainee expectations and workplace realities** presents an ongoing challenge, especially in smaller businesses.

Organizations seek enhanced **tools for competency assessment and trainee-company matching** to ensure objective candidate evaluation. Companies emphasize the importance of **comprehensive mentoring frameworks** incorporating regular guidance, clear objectives, and structured feedback systems. There's also a clear need for **improved infrastructure** for internship programs, including expanded networks of participating organizations and platforms connecting trainees with businesses. Additionally, organizations identify **financial and technical support** as crucial elements for ensuring program accessibility, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

SMEs are increasingly **developing comprehensive inclusion strategies**, from building workplace cultures based on respect and empathy to training and mentoring programs. These internship programs are viewed as **strategic investments in future talent**, with companies taking proactive steps to create sustainable, inclusive environments that counter stereotypes and prejudices. This evolution in workplace learning not only promotes **social inclusion** but also helps build more competitive organizations enriched by diverse perspectives.

Key Findings on VET Perspectives in Work-Based Learning

The experiences of vocational education and training (VET) representatives show that **recruitment, selection and integration of people from disadvantaged groups into work-based learning (WBL) programs** presents a significant challenge. A key issue is the **lack of a systematic approach** - most institutions do not have structured strategies in place, leading to reactive rather than proactive actions.

One of the most crucial factors influencing the success of disadvantaged individuals in WBL is their **access to professional networks**. It has been observed that such individuals often struggle to establish industry connections, significantly reducing their chances of securing internships. Additionally, **language proficiency and cultural norms** create additional barriers, which can lead to discrimination and make adaptation more difficult.

Employers play a vital role in the success of WBL programs, yet they frequently do not engage actively in the process. Instead, the responsibility for placing students in internships is often left to educational institutions. This lack of employer initiative limits opportunities for disadvantaged individuals, making it harder for them to enter the job market.



Analysis of the causes of inappropriate behaviors towards disadvantaged groups reveals a **lack of knowledge in society about the potential of people from disadvantaged groups** and **social stereotypes**. Attention was also drawn to people's own frustrations and complexes, which they cannot cope with and therefore treat people from disadvantaged groups in a negative way. Respondents also pointed to a **low level of emotional sensitivity**, combined with the schematism of action in the academic environment.

In positive examples of integration of disadvantaged groups, we can find **personalized support for students**, particularly those from multicultural backgrounds. Teachers assist students with CV writing, interview preparation, and understanding job requirements. Additionally, **proactive engagement in networking** and **direct engagement with employers** ensure opportunities for internships even for those facing barriers such as language and cultural differences.

Negative examples include the **lack of employer engagement** in internship programs. Despite the relatively low cost for employers, many need substantial persuasion to participate. **Bias or discrimination**, particularly against students from different backgrounds, further limits opportunities. The **lack of networking skills** among students and the **insufficient alignment of training programs with labor market needs** are also challenges that hinder the integration of disadvantaged groups.

The needs for tools to support recruitment, selection, and integration of disadvantaged groups share common elements. Tools for **better monitoring progress** and **support in building relationships with employers** are needed. The development of **digital platforms** to support selection and recruitment is necessary, while improving **language training** and **collaboration with companies** is crucial. All these aspects highlight the need for greater involvement of technology, better communication between schools and companies, and the development of social skills among participants.

VET representatives identify training needs in creating a **more inclusive environment** for disadvantaged groups, particularly by overcoming societal prejudices. They need to understand the potential of these individuals and build stronger relationships within academic and workplace communities. There is a need for better knowledge of **disabilities, cultural differences, and the specific needs of Generation Z**. Additionally, they seek guidance on **managing the WBL process**, building inclusive work environments, overcoming team biases, and resolving conflicts related to diversity.





| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Name of the Good Practice | Restart support - comprehensive activation project |
| Type of the Good Practice | Professional activation of people on the labor market |
| Country | Poland |
| City/Region | Kraków / Małopolska Voivodeship |
| Description | <p>For many years GDP Sp. z o.o. company has been carrying out projects related to the adaptation of seniors and unemployed people to the labour market. These projects enable people, who are in a difficult situation on the labour market, to return to professional activity. Returning to professional activity is possible by enabling them to acquire documented qualifications, competences and professional experience, as well as by reducing deficits in the field of social competences. It happens thanks to the participation of these seniors in comprehensive, personalized advisory and competence support, which is implemented throughout the Małopolska Voivodeship.</p> <p>RESTART projects have been implemented for several years. Each project takes approximately 1.5 - 2 years. The project "Restart V - Vocational Activation Program for People Over 50" was completed 2 years ago. The project was implemented under Priority Axis 8 Labour market, Measure 8.2 Professional activation. The project is co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund. The company is currently implementing the "Restart Support" project, which is a continuation of the previous editions of the "RESTART" project. The project is aimed at: women and men living in the Małopolska, who lost their jobs for reasons not related to the employee in a period not longer than 6 months before joining the project or people scheduled for dismissal/threatened with dismissal from work for reasons not related to the employee (in the last 12 months) and for people leaving agriculture. This project is implemented under the European Funds for Małopolska 2021-2027 program. Measure 6.6. Type B. Development of staff competences and adaptation to changes. The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund Plus. Project number FEMP.06.06-IP.02-0069/23.</p> <p>The main effect of the activities carried out as part of the Project will be to improve the situation of 100 Project participants on the labor market, who are at risk, laid off or in the process of being laid off or leaving agriculture through professional activation of the above-mentioned persons.</p> |



| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Description | <p>As part of the project, its participants are provided with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional internship (scholarship of PLN 2,880.00 gross) • training • grants for equipping and furnishing work stations • adapting support to people with disabilities • reimbursement for travel • teaching and training materials • reimbursement of costs of care for a person requiring support in everyday functioning (including children up to 7 years of age) • consultations with experienced experts <p>Participation in the Project enables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking up new employment • improving qualifications • maintaining current job position • increasing chances on the labour market • receiving an activity tailored to individual needs • taking advantage of a professional internship with guaranteed employment • participating in professional courses |
| Target Audience | <p>People meeting at least 1 of these criteria and living in the Małopolska.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employees scheduled for dismissal (in the last 12 months) • employees at risk of dismissal (in the last 12 months) • people dismissed for reasons unrelated to the employee (in the last 6 months) • people leaving agriculture |
| Good Practice Level | <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> European </p> <p><small>(Refers to EU Projects that implemented a relevant activity locally. Indicate the Name of the project and the Funding Programme. Local Partner should be considered as Responsible Organisation in 2.7 and co-partners should be mentioned in 2.9)</small></p> |
| Responsible Organisation | Grupa Doradcza Projekt Sp. Z o.o. (GDP) |
| Type of Organisation | <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Public / Governmental Organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organisation / NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Other [please specify.....] </p> |



| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|---|--|
| Involved Organisations and Stakeholders | Marta Krawczyk Probiznes |
| Timescale - Dates | From: [] to: [] <input type="checkbox"/> On-going. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Repeating |
| Objective | The main objective of the project is to increase professional adaptability or to obtain employment and/or to start their own business by 100 employees scheduled for dismissal and/or employees at risk of dismissal and/or persons dismissed for reasons unrelated to the employee and/or persons leaving agriculture, residing in the Małopolska Voivodeship – thanks to participation in the outplacement project in the period from 01.05.2024 to 31.10.2026. |
| Results | The main result of the activities carried out within the Project will be to improve the situation of 100 Project participants on the labour market who are at risk, have been made redundant or are in the process of being made redundant or are leaving agriculture through professional activation of the above-mentioned persons. |
| Innovative elements | An innovative element is the comprehensiveness of the assistance provided under the project and its renewable formula, which allows for the inclusion of new beneficiaries every year and helping them adapt to the labour market. |
| Website | https://www.gdp-krakow.pl/ |
| Contact Details | Grupa Doradcza Projekt spółka z o.o. Złotej Jesieni Estate 14, Room 101 31-828 Kraków, Poland Contact phone: +48 519 746 940 Email: biuro@gdp-krakow.pl Phone: +48 730 015 575 Email: projekt@probiznes.net.pl |
| Media | <p>The screenshot shows the website for 'Grupa Doradcza Projekt' (GDP). The navigation menu includes: Home page, News, Our services (underlined), About Us, Cooperation, and Contact. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a list of links: RECRUITMENT (documents to download), RECRUITMENT TOURS, GRANTS FOR BUSINESS ACTIVITY (documents and rules), PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS, ACCESSIBILITY OF THE PROJECT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, RANKING LISTS (Grants), and ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT CALL FOR. A prominent banner for 'PROJECTS Restart support - comprehensive activation project' is displayed. At the bottom, logos for 'Fundacja Demokracja w Hospicjum', 'Rozwojemedia Polska', 'Dofinansowane przez Unię Europejską', and 'MAŁOPOLSKA' are visible.</p> |



Poland

| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Consideration as a BP | Everything has been described in detail and justified in the section on the description of good practice. |



Finland

| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|---|---|
| Name of the Good Practice | Futura-Working life and career services |
| Type of the Good Practice | Method, model |
| Country | Finland |
| City/Region | Helsinki |
| Description | <p>Futura-Working life and career services: Supports students in getting the job needed to complete their degree at home or abroad (On-the-job learning or TTO) Create avenues and ideas for studies and postgraduate studies Build pathways to working life during studies rather than after studies Supports the development of students' working life skills and abilities</p> |
| Target Audience | Students, working-life, entrepreneurs, teachers, staff |
| Good Practice Level | <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> European <small>(Refers to EU Projects that implemented a relevant activity locally. Indicate the Name of the project and the Funding Programme. Local Partner should be considered as Responsible Organisation in 2.7 and co-partners should be mentioned in 2.9)</small> |
| Responsible Organisation | Helsinki Business College Ltd. |
| Type of Organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Public / Governmental Organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organisation / NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Other [please specify.....] |
| Involved Organisations and Stakeholders | Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce |
| Timescale - Dates | From: [] to: [] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-going <input type="checkbox"/> Repeating |
| Objective | Supports the development of students' working life skills and abilities |
| Results | Internships and working life networks, development of work-based learning for students, teachers, staff and working life and entrepreneurs. |



| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Innovative elements | One stop service for students and staff/Innovative WBL-Event |
| Website | https://en.bc.fi/student-services/guidande-and-support/futura/ |
| Contact Details | Helena Miettinen helena.miettinen@bc.fi Taru Toivonen taru.toivonen@bc.fi |
| Media | https://en.bc.fi/student-services/guidande-and-support/futura/ |
| Consideration as a BP | <p>1. Enhances Employment Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Career services provide job search support, networking opportunities, and skill development that improve employability. • Measurable Indicators: Employment rates, job retention rates, number of successful job placements. • Results: Higher percentage of graduates securing jobs within their field of study. • Success Factors: Strong employer partnerships, effective career coaching. • Lesson Learned: Personalized career counselling yields better job matches. <p>2. Supports Lifelong Learning and Skills Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Work-life and career services help individuals continuously update their skills to match evolving job market needs. • Measurable Indicators: Number of training programs completed skill certification rates. • Results: Increased adaptability and career progression for individuals. • Success Factors: Access to relevant training, industry collaborations. • Lesson Learned: Continuous learning enhances long-term career resilience. <p>3. Promotes Work-Life Balance and Well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Career services often include guidance on managing stress, time, and professional development alongside personal responsibilities. • Measurable Indicators: Employee satisfaction surveys, work-life balance scores. • Results: Reduced burnout and increased job satisfaction. • Success Factors: Flexible work arrangements, mental health support. • Lesson Learned: A well-balanced employee is more productive and engaged. |



GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION

Consideration as a BP

4. Bridges the Gap Between Education and Employment

- Why? These services connect students and job seekers with real-world work opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring.
- Measurable Indicators: Internship participation rates, employer satisfaction with new hires.
- Results: Smoother transitions from education to work.
- Success Factors: Strong industry partnerships, hands-on work experience.
- Lesson Learned: Practical experience is key to securing employment.

5. Encourages Inclusive and Diverse Career Growth

- Why? Career services promote equal access to job opportunities regardless of background.
- Measurable Indicators: Diversity in employment statistics, career progression of underrepresented groups.
- Results: More inclusive workplaces and career advancement for diverse talent.
- Success Factors: Targeted mentorship programs, equal opportunity policies.
- Lesson Learned: Diversity and inclusion drive innovation and better workplace cultures.



| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|---|---|
| Name of the Good Practice | Intertalents in Sweden |
| Type of the Good Practice | Private initiative |
| Country | Sweden |
| City/Region | Stockholm |
| Description | Intertalents in Sweden aims to empower internationals to feel like they're included in the Swedish workforce by providing a toolbox of job searching skills made specifically for the foreign-born job seeker. |
| Target Audience | Foreign-born job seekers and organisations hiring foreign-born job seekers |
| Good Practice Level | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> European <small>(Refers to EU Projects that implemented a relevant activity locally. Indicate the Name of the project and the Funding Programme. Local Partner should be considered as Responsible Organisation in 2.7 and co-partners should be mentioned in 2.9)</small> |
| Responsible Organisation | Intertalents Sweden |
| Type of Organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Public / Governmental Organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organisation / NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Other [please specify.....] |
| Involved Organisations and Stakeholders | Emigreat, Personal Finance Sweden AB |
| Timescale - Dates | From: [] to: [] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-going <input type="checkbox"/> Repeating |
| Objective | To provide comprehensive professional services that include CV review, one-on-one consulting, speaking events and consultations for organisations. |
| Results | Courses & Webinars. Testimonials: https://intertalentsinsweden.com/testimonials/ |
| Innovative elements | Networking-focused consultancy |
| Website | https://intertalentsinsweden.com/ |



| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Contact Details | info@intertalentsinsweden.com |
| Media | https://www.linkedin.com/company/intertalentsinsweden/ |
| Consideration as a BP | <p>Amanda Herzog, who is the CEO of Intertalents in Sweden, is a career development coach with a strong stand in DI. She is advocating for international hires and promotes diversity and inclusion through personalised consultancy.</p> <p>Intertalents in Sweden has a personal story and was founded because of a common scenario – three foreign-born professionals who had struggled to find work in Sweden despite being highly qualified. They had the same stories, too: applying for hundreds of jobs with seemingly perfect CV's but little response.</p> <p>After collecting many years of education – some through life experiences, and some through professional services, they're now on a mission to give back to the expat community by offering a guiding light to those seeking successful careers in Sweden.</p> <p>The courses and programs are created from a place of compassion, experience, and credible backgrounds.</p> |



| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Name of the Good Practice | Inclusion for all |
| Type of the Good Practice | Private/Internal Initiative |
| Country | Spain |
| City/Region | León |
| Description | Corocotta Ocio is an organization with over 7 years of experience, specializing in the design of innovative leisure, magic, sports, and adventure programs for all ages. Their approach combines learning and entertainment, promoting technical, social, and creative values through activities such as workshops, extracurricular programs, events, excursions, and animations. Their educational project is based on the development of multiple intelligences, enhancing artistic, cultural, and physical skills in both children and adults. |
| Target Audience | Youngsters, Children, Schools, City Halls and Municipalities |
| Good Practice Level | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> European <small>(Refers to EU Projects that implemented a relevant activity locally. Indicate the Name of the project and the Funding Programme. Local Partner should be considered as Responsible Organisation in 2.7 and co-partners should be mentioned in 2.9)</small> |
| Responsible Organisation | Corocotta Ocio |
| Type of Organisation | Private Organisation |
| Timescale - Dates | On-going and Repeating (it is an initiative they have been developing since they started with the enterprise) |
| Objective | Corocotta Ocio provides internal training for all its instructors, covering topics such as inclusion, special needs, and best practices to ensure the highest quality service for the companies and municipalities they collaborate with, as well as for the end users. The company's leaders have completed courses on gender equality and special needs support and have extensive experience working with various types of businesses and centers that serve people with disabilities. |
| Results | The results are the reviews and the opinion that all their stakeholders have from them.. |



| GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Innovative elements | |
| Website | https://www.corocottaocio.com/ |
| Contact Details | info@corocottaocio.es |
| Media | https://www.corocottaocio.com/actividades |
| Consideration as a BP | <p>This practice is considered a Good Practice because it ensures high-quality and inclusive services through continuous training for instructors. By focusing on inclusion, special needs, and best practices, Corocotta Ocio helps its team provide better support to diverse groups. This ongoing training not only benefits the end users but also improves collaboration with companies and municipalities, making their services more accessible. Additionally, the company's leaders have training in gender equality and special needs, giving them the knowledge to apply the best approaches in different environments and create a more inclusive and supportive community.</p> <p>Over the years, Corocotta Ocio has continued to improve and refine its internal training programs, adapting them to new challenges and needs. Their dedication to professional development and high-quality service has earned them recognition as one of the best leisure and recreation companies in the region, known for their commitment to inclusion and excellence.</p> |



FOSTERING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN WORK-BASED
LEARNING FOR SMOOTHER VET-TO-WORK TRANSITION

