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Module IO3:

Student companies act internationally

- Module Structure -

Module introduction and didactic objectives

In this module, the teacher will find stimuli on, as well as approaches to the interlinking of student company work regarding the subject of internationalisation.

Module IO3 Student companies acting internationally. Intercultural learning was created (in addition to the modules listed below) within the scope of the EU project WIN[2] for making business training international[1]. This is the third of seven modules:

> Module IO1: Companies and company establishment
>   – Setting up a Student Company
>
> Module IO2: Student Company Work and Career Guidance
>
> Module IO3: International Student Company Work
>
> Module IO4: The peer approach in student company work
>
> Module IO5: Institutionalisation of student companies in schools.
>   Student company sustainability
>
> Module IO6: Internet-supported training concept
>
> Module IO7: Interlinking theory and practice in student work and teaching

All modules focus on the topic of the *student company* and examine it from different perspectives.

In the Win[2] project, a total of five student companies were founded in all three participating countries in the first implementation year (2014/2015)[2]. In the following year, project activities focused on the subject of internationalisation. Different approaches were developed and implemented in the project. These are presented in this module. For example, the student companies introduced themselves at the 8th international student fair in Berlin or developed ideas for initiating business contacts with Win[2] student companies which are located abroad.

From the outset, the project was designed to provide for the gathering of such experiences and to gain insight through cooperation between schools in Germany, Bulgaria and Poland, which can also be used in other countries and schools for developing internationally active student companies. This is the reason why not only the individual project components and measures are listed below, but rather the development of materials and support instru

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[1] The Erasmus+ project (2014-2017) will be implemented in cooperation with educational institutions and schools in Poland, Bulgaria and Germany and coordinated by the Institute for Economic Education (Germany). The objective of the project is to found student companies in participating schools and to network them internationally.

[2] Germany: Ecocubes (manufacture and distribution of wooden cubes); Poland: Stuart (school kiosk) and yNot (advertising agency), Bulgaria: Event management (organisation and conducting of events) and Nikolaevka (production and sale of juices). More information is available under: http://www.winwin-youngentrepreneur.eu/

ments (e.g. in the form of guidelines), which can also be used elsewhere. The main focus is on the following aspects:

- Organisation and content of student company project meetings from different EU countries (Material IO3_1)
- Participation in international student companies - experience and potential (Material IO3_2)
- Developing and setting objectives for types of cross-border cooperation for student companies (Material IO3_3 - _7)
- Intercultural skills - first proposals for instructional communication (Material IO3_8)

In summary, you will find below:

- Experience reports from the Win2 project, illustrating the possibilities and potential for cross-border cooperation for student companies,
- Information on possibilities to transfer to other schools, as well as
- Concrete support tools and material recommendations for implementation.

In this way, the project-makers hope to motivate many teachers in many respects to take the step to international integration and networking in student company work.

Material IO3_1_Teacher:

Win² Project Experience Report Regarding the Internationalisation of Student Companies

The subject of internationalisation and cooperation with foreign countries can also be integrated and addressed in the context of student company work. For this purpose, there are different approaches to interlinking, which can be developed in the course of business education and tested practically (student company).

Thus, there are student companies, e.g. Macadamia*Fans* from Göttingen (see http://hainberg-gymnasium.de/1187/), whose business idea was based on international trade from the outset. The employees of this school company purchase certified organic macadamia nuts from farmers in Kenya and sell them in local shops as well as in their own school. Participation in the student company encourages students to deal with *fair trade*. At the same time, the students learn how a value chain is developed through the practical

Figure IO3_1_1: Macadamiafans at the 8th International student company fair in Berlin (2017, Photo: IÖB)

work in the student company, and they improve their English skills by corresponding with the foreign business partners.

In the Win² project, the student company start-ups and the contacts with foreign student companies was monitored in two ways:

1. Through the student company employees' participation at the International Student Company Fair (see the following material IO3_2), as well as

2. By initiating cross-border trade relations between the Win² student companies.

In this material, the Win² project content methodological approach is presented, which targets the initiation of the business relations between the student companies. The students created ideas for this during a one-week project meeting in Poland. However, the introduction into the subject of internationalisation had already taken place prior to the meeting in the business classes in the participating schools.

Figure IO3_1_2: The targeted link between student company locations

Introduction to the Subject of Internationalisation in Business Education

The introduction into the subject of internationalisation took place in business classes in all participating schools by examining the subject "My region" and how it is intertwined with European and international economic events. In this context, the students developed a presentation on *My region and its integration with other countries*, which they presented to the other project participants during the first project meeting. This topic was addressed more in depth at the project meeting.

The One-Week Project Meeting in Poland

The meeting began with the aforementioned student presentations. The lecturers discussed the interdependencies of the regions in relation to the European Union and the European Economic Area. Issues such as the importance of economic relations between companies for the development of a common economic region and globalisation as a challenge for the European economic market were introduced and discussed with the students. The importance of the European internal market was emphasised.

Later, knowledge of these subjects was deepened through expert interviews and investigations. The involvement of experts from businesses enabled the students to learn about the region's complex interrelationships with foreign countries from different perspectives.

Figure IO3_1_3: Bulgarian students (PTS) present the importance of the logistics sector in the Varna region (2nd Project meeting, March 2016).

Practical Contact I: Interviews with Experts: Interlinking with foreign countries from the forwarder's point of view

The chairman of the Polish Association of Transport Companies presented the complexity of operations for the transport of goods in Europe to the students. The association's integration into the globally active network *International Road Transport Union (IRU)* was also addressed (Figure IO3_14_4).
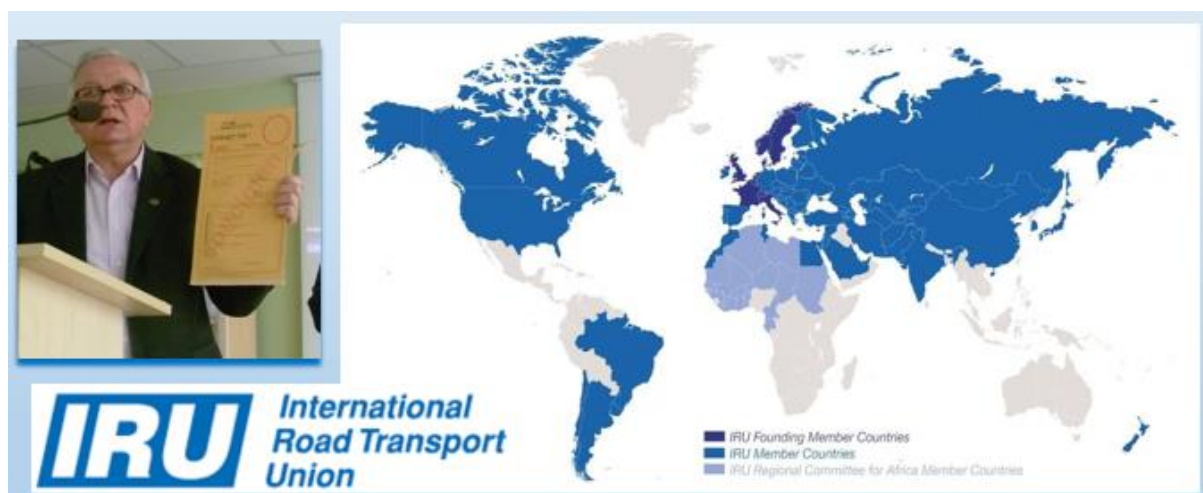

Figure IO3_1_4: Slavomir Kostjan, director of the Polish Association of Transport Companies, shows the students an example of interlinking in the logistics sector in the Biała Podlaska region (Photo: IÖB).

The students were shown different challenges, which are faced by freight transport companies in Europe and beyond. It stressed the importance of customs tariffs, the domestic market and the external borders of the European Union for freight transport and goods trading. Plans were identified that would lead to the standardisation of formal processing and simplification of freight transport.

Evaluation

After the meeting, the information that had been gathered was evaluated, systematised, reflected on, and related to domestic and foreign trade in the European Union.

The Win[2] project lecturers highlighted the importance of the four fundamental freedoms in the European Union. Here too, examples were addressed which lead to standardisation. The right to free movement with regard to the students' (occupational) chances was discussed. In this context, Europass for example, has shown that instruments have also been developed in the field of "application processes", which are aimed at standardising application methods across Europe. The students were introduced to the guidelines which were developed for this purpose.

Practical Contact Il: Exploring the Customs Office. Interlinking the Region from a Customs Official's Point of View

The importance of the free movement of goods in Europe was the focus of the research at the customs office in Koroszczyn, which is the largest border crossing on the eastern border of the European Union (Figure IO3_1_5). The students prepared questions for the research, which they then asked the customs officials. They learned about the history of the border crossing and the local officials' work processes, asked questions about occupations there, as well as about the necessary competences and admittance requirements. Again, the issue of external EU borders was addressed and deepened. At the same time, customs officials addressed networking the offices at national and EU level as well as with customs offices in other countries which are not EU members.

Through this, the second level of networking the region with foreign countries became evident to the students.

Figure IO3_1_5: External EU borders and goods trading. The students explore the largest border crossing to Poland's eastern neighbours (Photo: IÖB).

Evaluation

Reflection on the meeting with customs officials made it clear that the Biała Podlaska region is also closely interlinked with other countries: The customs officials not only have direct contact with the people and goods leaving the EU area and accessing the European domestic market. When the customs officials addressed the possibilities for admittance to occupations available at the terminal and mandatory training, it became clear that there is also close networking between offices in Poland and other countries regarding professional development.

The lecturers then directed the students' attention to the companies. In this discussion, companies' motives for cooperating with foreign countries and different types of cooperation were discussed, as well as opportunities and risks arising in this context. Here, reference was made to subjects from business education. The effects of legal regulations on the development of (cross-border) economic relations were particularly emphasised. The importance of such an achievement as the European Union for the citizens' everyday life and for enterprises became particularly clear.

Practical Contact Ill: Exploring Bialcon. Interlinking with foreign countries from a company's Point of View

The Polish students presented information about the textile company Bialcon in Biała Podlaska, which trades internationally. This was followed by a group task, in which questions catalogues were developed for the following topics:

- Motivating companies for foreign trade,

- customer acquisition abroad,
- foreign customers,
- marketing strategies,
- intercultural skills.

The students interviewed company representatives and recorded the answers.

Figure IO3_1_6: Why trade internationally? Students ask experts from local business (Photos: IÖB).

The Evaluation

Reflection on the research showed an example of a local company in that the region which cooperates with companies abroad. The students were informed about how customer acquisition is organised abroad and how the wishes of Polish customers differ from those in other foreign countries (e.g. regarding the colour of the products and that organic products tend to be preferred abroad). It also became clear that certain competences are needed in companies when searching for new sales markets. The foreign language skills, which are not only important for direct contact with customers, were also addressed. These also facilitate market research via the internet or on location. The students could also reflect the importance of the four freedoms in the European Union for the company, since the company's representatives also gave examples of this, such as export facilitation or that it is possible to quickly visit a customer on location since no visa is necessary, etc.

Student Companies and the Subject of Internationalisation

The information obtained from the three practical contacts was viewed with reference to the student company. The lecturers discussed with the students whether they could imagine cooperation between the student companies and foreign countries and then collected the students' first ideas.

Using material IO3_3, the students took the first step by discussing possible approaches to the internationalisation of their own student company work. They created ideas for the

establishment of business relations with the student companies from another project coun-
try and worked out the advantages and disadvantages of each of the ideas in student com-
pany teams. The student company teams presented their results to the forum (see figure
IO3_1_7).

Figure IO3_1_7: Win^2 student companies represent the advantages and disadvantages of the interna-
tionalisation of their student company (here: StuArt, Photo: IÖB).

The students then chose the idea that was most advantageous for their student company
and exchanged ideas with their respective "business partners" about a possible approach to
implementation (see figure IO3_1_8). Individual steps were discussed in tandem, recorded
in writing, and a binding agreement was reached. After the project meeting the following
ideas were initiated:

- Student companies *Ecocubes* (Germany, production of wooden cubes) and *StuArt*
  (Poland, school kiosk): The students from Poland bought the wooden cubes to equip
  their sales areas.
- Student company *yNot* (Poland, advertising agency) created a student company fly-
  er for *Ecocubes* (Germany, wooden cubes).
- On the other hand, there was a regular exchange of information between the Bul-
  garian student company *Event Management* and the Polish and German student
  companies regarding measures/events implemented.

Figure IO3_1_8: Student companies discuss the implementation of their ideas for internationalisation (Photos: IÖB).

The implementation of the ideas was supported by the local business teachers. The students learned:

- how to create offers for foreign customers,
- how these offers differ from offers to local customers and
- how correspondence is managed and how the agreement processes between the "business partners" is organised and carried out.

Using this example and the following material, it becomes clear that student company work can be linked very well with the topic of "internationalisation". The approaches presented here can be found in student company work and offer a large scope for action. The topics which can be addressed in the field of business were given as examples in this material and in the following.

What further approaches to the internationalisation of student companies can be implemented is described in more detail in material IO3_3_Lehrkraft.

Material IO3_2_Lehrkraft:

Experience Report on the Win² project. Participation in the 8th International Student Company Fair in Berlin

The opening up of the student companies to the idea of internationalisation was also achieved in the Win² project by participating in the 8th international trade fair in Berlin (2017). The student company employees were given the task to build the test stand and to prepare themselves for exchange with the other participants as well as other exhibiting student companies in a foreign language (English).

Figure IO3_15_1: International Student Company Fair in Berlin (Photo: IÖB)

The students' content preparation for the trade fair was done in advance in business lessons by addressing the following content areas:

- Why are trade fairs organised?
- What is their significance for business?
- What are the different characteristics and target groups at trade fairs?
- What motivates companies to participate in trade fairs?
- etc.

It was also recommended to link the subject of marketing in business education to the planned trade fair visit, and to deepen if necessary.

During the fair, the students were given the task to gather information (see the observation sheet on the following page). The information was evaluated at school after the fair and posters were designed for trade fair visits. The posters were presented by student company teams at the subsequent project meeting as an introduction to reflection on project activities.

Figure IO3_2_2: Ecocubes and StuArt employees at the student company fair (Photo: IÖB)

In order to ensure a systematic approach was taken, the following observation sheet was used as a structuring instrument. The information gathered here is to be used in particular for the further development of the schools' own student companies:

Observation Sheet International Student Company Fair

1. Which industries are represented in the fair? *Name at least three!*

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

2. Are foreign student companies from the same industry as yours participating in the fair? Which student companies are they?

    ▪ Name three selected student companies and the countries from which they come. Use the table below.
    ▪ Then conduct a short interview with the selected student company and obtain information on which business idea their student company is based and look for differences and similarities between your student companies.

3. Take a photo of the student company that you've interviewed.

4. How did the other student companies present themselves? Which ideas for the student company presentations did you find successful and why?

5. Research the organisers:

    ✓ Why are such trade fairs organised?

    ✓ Which target groups does it address?

    ✓ Which countries are the exhibitors from?

    ✓ How many student companies are involved in total?

    ✓ Which industries are represented?

    ✓ How many visitors are expected?

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Name of student company	Business idea	This is similar:	This is different:
Name: Country:			
Name: Country:			
Name: Country:			
Notes:			

Erasmus+

Experience Report from the Win² Project.

Participation in the International Student Company Fair in Berlin was rated as a very good opportunity to establish contacts with foreign student companies. The organisers support contact between young people through numerous workshops. Events for teachers were also offered in which the exchange of experience took place.

By participating in the fair, one of the Win² student companies (Ecocubes) made contact with the Takeoff student company from Novosibirsk. It is currently being expanded and its objective is to exchange experience (for more information, see module IO4 on The Peer Approach in Student Company Work, and material IO4_3_2).

Lecturers, students and teachers from the Win² project viewed their participation in the student company fair as particularly inspiring. Students from Germany were also faced with the challenge of presenting themselves and their student company in English.

While student company fairs are frequently held in Germany, they are largely unknown in Eastern European countries. Learning about such an event, which targets students and focuses on them and their student companies, on the international scene was very helpful for all students and teachers involved in the project, but especially for the participants from Poland and Bulgaria.

Figure IO3_2_3: International workshop for student company employees at the International Student Company Fair in Berlin 2017 (Photo: IÖB)

Material IO3_3_Lehrkraft:

What Types of Cooperation Are Possible with the Student Companies Abroad?

In this material, you will find information on possible cross-border cooperation goals between student companies as well as information from research on student companies abroad.

The project experience shows the cooperation between student companies "across borders" is expressly recommended as it contains very high didactic value for students. When the students' activities focus on the student company work, the didactic value goes beyond the promotion of foreign language skills by communicating with the young people abroad and getting to know another country. The students' cooperation can be focused on the following objectives:

1) Exchange of Experience

Whether personal or online: The students can exchange ideas about one aspect of their student company work. In addition to presenting their business ideas and everyday business, subjects such as the start-up phase, pursued marketing strategies, products/services offered, challenges and objectives, etc., offer a wide range of approaches that student company employees can discuss.

2) Jointly Implemented Projects

Schools can develop a joint project that takes up and intensifies a partial aspect of the student company work, e.g. an analysis of cultural differences or different customer preferences in different countries and their effects on the respective marketing strategies. The project can also be the joint development of flyers, the design of advertising articles for foreign customers or the setting up of a homepage in a foreign language.

3) Business Contacts Between Student Companies

This approach was tested during the Win² project. However, the initiation of business contacts ("cross-border trade" between the student companies) can create difficulties initially, since in many public schools the handling of the cash flow can be problematic. Should such types of cooperation be desired between student companies, teachers are advised to clarify the modalities with the partners abroad before they lead to frustration among the students. In order to gain the time for conceptual-organisational and the clarification of modalities, the cooperation with a foreign school can first be limited to the implementation of a (smaller) joint project.

How Can Student Companies Be Found Abroad?

In addition to the usual internet research, the following information can be helpful when searching for student companies abroad:

1) Student Companies in Bulgaria, Germany, Poland

Using the Win² project homepage (http://www.winwin-youngentrepreneur.eu/) you can make contact with the student companies in Germany, Poland and Bulgaria. The schools listed on the homepage (see Figure IO3_3_1) already have student companies. Their business ideas are shown in the video clips embedded there. These schools are experienced in working with foreign schools. English is taught in all schools and there are English speaking teachers and contact persons available.
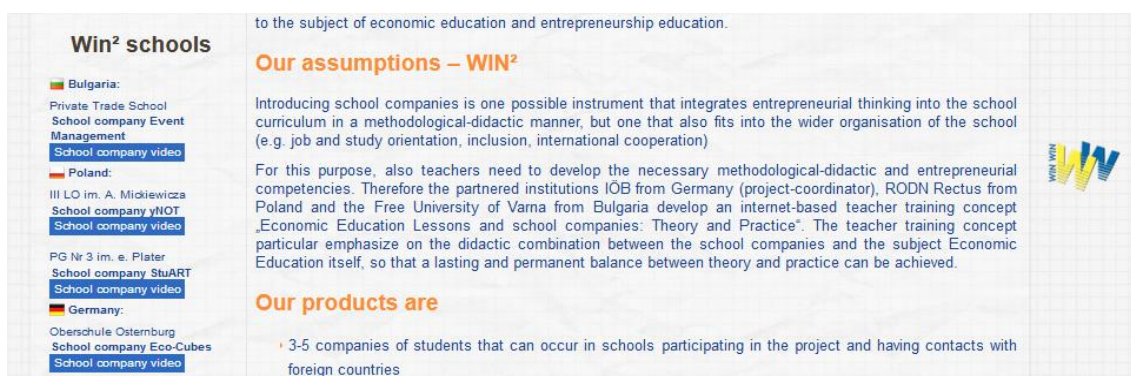
Figure IO3_3_1: Screenshot from the Win² project homepage

2) Student Companies in Spain, Italy, Germany

In 2015 - 2017 student companies (Fly Away, Narway, KLA) were set up in vocational schools as part of a further Erasmus+ project (PACE). The schools participating in the project focused on the tourism industry. The project was coordinated by the University of Bremen (Germany) (see PACE project: https://blogs.uni-bremen.de/pace/).

Figure IO3_3_2: Student companies in Italy, Spain and Germany (Erasmus+, project PACE, see https://blogs.uni-bremen.de/pace/)

3) International Meeting Place for Student Companies

The Children, Youth and Family Centre in Berlin (FEZ) organises an international student company fair every two years. As described in the material IO3_2, 59 student companies from the Win² project participated in the eighth International Student Fair in February 2017. In addition to student companies from Germany, student companies from Poland, Spain, England, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden and Montenegro took part. You will find a list of all student companies which participated in the fair in 2017 on the homepage.

The International Student Company Fair takes place on two days. On the first day (specialist day) the students get to know each other in industry workshops, where an intensive exchange of experience regarding the student company work takes place. At the same time, workshops for the teachers are also held on different aspects of the student company work. The second day of the fair is a public visitor's day on which the students present their business ideas. In 2017, approximately 1500 visitors attended the fair.

More information on the 8th International Student Company Fair is available here:

https://lernen-macht-fez.fez-berlin.de/index.php?id=1081

4) Junior Achievement

You can receive first information on student company start-ups as well as information about student networks abroad through Junior Achievement. This non-profit organisation was founded in the USA in 1919, is active worldwide and is represented in many European countries (see http://www.jaeurope.org/).

5) eTwinning: Supports Establishing Contacts with Schools

The eTwinning platform created by the European Union for schools promoting cooperation makes it possible for you to contact schools in the European Union that are looking for partnerships abroad. In this way, you can offer a student company topic to schools abroad and work out a partial aspect of the student company work as part of a joint project.

Information on how to contact other schools and how to use the platform can be found here: https://www.etwinning.net/de/pub/index.htm

Material IO3_4:

Checklist: Objectives of Cooperation with Student Companies Abroad

In the checklist below, you will find ideas for objectives upon which your student company cooperation with a student company abroad could be based. Go through the checklist and consider the type of cooperation your student company could best benefit from. Mark the ideas which you believe you could implement. Then discuss which idea you like best with the team.

Checklist. Possible Objectives for Cooperation with Student Companies Abroad

⇨ Exchange of experience

Are you implementing a similar business idea that a student company abroad is implementing and it interests you to know how another student company is doing it? Or do you think a different business idea, which other students are implementing, is particularly exciting? Perhaps you have also seen products which foreign student companies offer, but you don't know the production process the other student company is using.

> Notes:

⇨ Implementation of a joint project

Perhaps you could implement a joint project with a foreign student company. For example, this could be the joint production of flyers, or a student company home page. It could be the production of advertising materials for both student companies in one or several different languages.

> Notes:

⇨ Export your Products/Services

You have analysed a foreign student company's product range and could you imagine that they might be interested in your products. Perhaps your products/services could complement another student company's products.

Notes:

⇨ Import your Products/Services

Would your customers be interested in another student company's products? Are you interested in knowing the price of the products from other student companies?

Notes:

1. Research student companies abroad and see if you find a foreign student company that could be a potential partner.

Material IO3_5:

Our National and International Student Company

You have already dealt with the subject of international trade and you know the reasons and motives why businesses cooperate with other businesses abroad. Student companies are not only located in your country. They are also founded and operated in other countries.

Wouldn't it be exciting to find out which business ideas student companies in other countries are addressing? Or to think about cooperation between your student company and a student company from another country?

1. Do research on the internet (see tips on the following page) and collect information on what foreign student companies offer their customers and how they presented themselves on the internet. Enter the five most exciting foreign student companies' ideas in Table 1. Enter the name, the business idea and the student company contact address in the columns provided. Think about the extent to which initiating cooperation could be interesting for your student company.

   Tip: While doing your research, remember to save the internet pages to the student companies that you are most interested in, so that you can find them later.

   Have you thought about publishing your student company presentation on the internet in English or in another foreign language (e.g. on the project home page or in social networks)? This increases the likelihood that your student company will be found by foreign internet users / students who might be interested in contacting you.

2. Present the research results in your student company team. Then discuss which student companies have aroused your interest and why. Then consider your next steps together.

Tips for searching for student companies abroad

In addition to the usual internet search for existing student companies abroad, you can use the following:

1. The Win² Project homepage (http://www.winwin-youngentrepreneur.eu/, if you are interested in contacting a student company in Germany, Poland or Bulgaria. The schools listed on the homepage (see Figure IO3_5_1) already have student companies. The students present their business ideas in video clips. English is taught in all listed schools and there are English speaking teachers and contact persons available.

Figure IO3_5_1: A screenshot from the Win² project homepage

2. You can find student companies from Italy, Spain and Germany using the PACE project home page:

Figure IO3_5_2: Student companies in Italy, Spain and Germany (Erasmus+, project PACE, see https://blogs.uni-bremen.de/pace/)

3. Remember to use social networks such as Facebook. The student companies are very often found there.

4. The following key words will help you with your internet search for student companies abroad:

   - Germany: Student company
   - Poland: The uczniowska company
   - Bulgaria: Ученическата фирма
   - Russia: Школьная компания
   - England: Student Company or junior company
   - etc.

Table 1: Our Research Results for Student Companies Abroad

Student company/Name	Business idea	This would be interesting for our student company:	Contact information internet address, contact person
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Erasmus+

Material IO3_6:

Making Contact with the Student Company Abroad

The first impression is important, especially for the first contact. Consider how to present yourselves and how to formulate your queries.

Regardless of whether you are going to contact the student company abroad directly or through the school, think about the following points when making contact:

- Contact the school or the student company employees in English or in their national language.
- Give a short introduction to your student company before you state your query.
- If you make contact by e-mail, it is useful to send a presentation of your student company in an attached document. This could be a PowerPoint presentation in which you introduce yourselves.

  The document should contain …

  ✓ the name of your student company and possibly your logo,
  ✓ a description of what your student company offers,
  ✓ an introduction of your team,
  ✓ a reference to your website or pages in social networks,
  ✓ a contact person and
  ✓ your school address and possibly a map of the area where your school is located.

  Tip: Remember that it is better to send a document in PDF format. With other document types, your format could change if the addressee uses a different version of the program than you do.

- If the contact is made by post, you can print out your student company presentation and send it as an enclosure.
- Describe your query clearly.
- Ask if they are interested in your contact.
- Also include your contact person, their contact data and possibly the telephone number where they can be reached in the e-mail or letter.

Material IO3_7_Lehrkraft:

Methodical Design of the First Meeting Between School Businesses

The introductory phase between the student companies from different countries can be carried out using different methods:

1. Researching a student company

   Numerous references to carrying out research on student companies are available in module IO4 *The Peer Approach in Student Company*. The following materials are of particular relevance:

   - Researching an existing student company *(Material IO4_1_2)*
   - Researching our student company: How do we prepare? *(Material IO4_1_3)*

   The focus of the research can be placed on a selected topic from the student company work, e.g. production processes or organisation within the student company.

2. Speed-dating among student companies

   The employees from the student companies exchange their experiences from the student company work regarding selected topics, such as procurement/production, sales/marketing, set-up and process organisation, finances or team building.

   One example of a method of implementation can be found in *module IO4 the peer approach in the student company work* in the sample materials: *Speed-Dating with existing student companies (Material IO4_1_4)*

3. Workshops on specific topics (Peer to Peer Approach)

   Is there a topic in which the students in one student company have advanced knowledge, e.g. on a specific production process? You can find suggestions for the possible procedures in aforementioned module IO4, in particular the following materials:

   - Expert wanted! (Material IO4_2_1)
   - We advise student companies (Material IO4_2_2)
   - You know something that we don't! (Material IO4_3_1)

Material IO3_8_Lehrkraft:
Win² project report. Communicating Intercultural Skills

Communicating the first aspects of "intercultural skills" was an essential part of all project meetings. The students from Bulgaria, Germany and Poland worked together and also learned the history and special things about the cities and countries through city tours and lectures. At the same time, in each of the three one-week project meetings, additional activities were developed and conducted, which focused the young people's attention on the cultural differences and similarities:

1. Oldenburg/Germany, First Project Meeting

In Oldenburg groups of students (both German and non-German project students) conducted interviews with the townspeople in the Oldenburg pedestrian zone and recorded the answers. Students were to gather information about local dishes, monuments and special features in the town. The recorded interviews from the Win² students from Poland and Bulgaria were played on a local radio station, in which they themselves talked about special features in their home regions.

The recordings were made into a radio programme (3 x O - Oldenburg in question?!). It was accompanied by popular songs from Poland, Bulgaria and Germany, which the students had brought with them to Oldenburg for the project meeting.

Figure IO3_8_1: "3xO Oldenburg in question?!" – a radio programme on cultural differences (Win² Project, Photo: IÖB)

2. Biała Podlaska/Poland, Second Project Meeting

In Biała Podlaska the students also spoke (both Polish and non-Polish Win² students) with the inhabitants about the region and the city's history in groups. In addition, interviews were conducted by the Win² students in the two participating schools. The students were particularly interested in how and where Polish young people spend their free time.

3. Varna/Bulgaria, Third Project Meeting

In Varna (Bulgaria, third project meeting) the students got to know traditional dances and costumes. In addition, students from Varna organised a workshop in which they presented the Bulgarian good luck charm, the Martenitsa, and its history to the foreign guests. Afterwards, everyone learned how to make one (Figure IO3_21_2).

Figure IO3_8_2: Third project meeting (March 2017): Win² students learn about Bulgarian tradition (here: Workshop: Martenitsa; Photos: IÖB).

Figure IO3_8_3: Third project meeting (March 2017): Win² students learn about Bulgarian dance and costumes (Photos: IÖB).

Win² Workshop on *Intercultural Skills*

In the workshop on intercultural skills, which was organised during the last project meeting in Bulgaria, students were reminded of the project activities on cultural differences in the three countries. The keywords they had gathered were enhanced using further examples from other countries (culinary culture, greetings, etc.) and served as an introduction to the discussion on "culture". They were systematised using figure IO3_8_4.
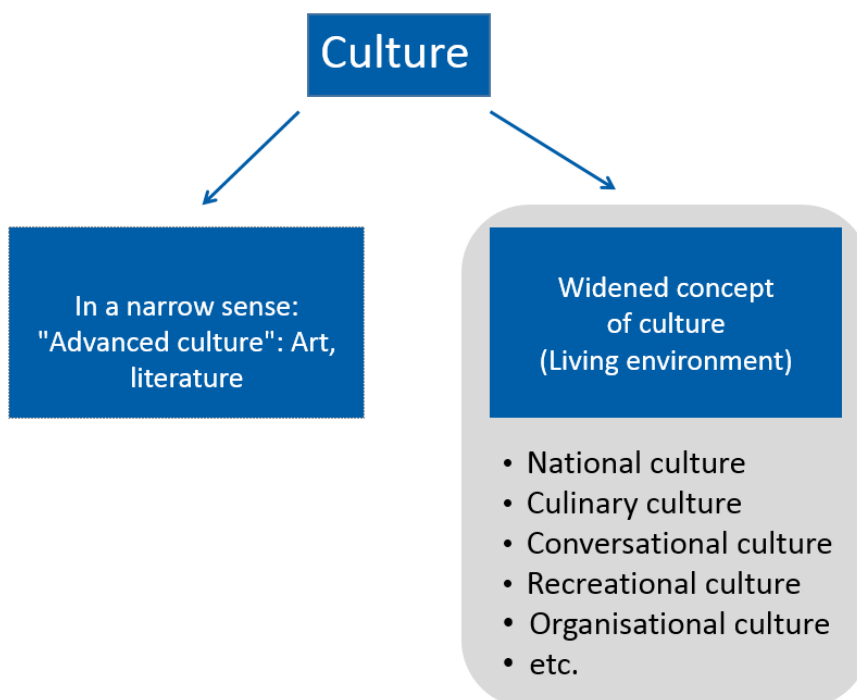

Figure IO3_8_4: Two dimensions of the term "culture"

The lecturers emphasised that each one is characterised by "their" culture, but one usually becomes aware of this when they come into contact with other cultures, for example during holidays abroad. A distinction was made between culture and cultural traditions.
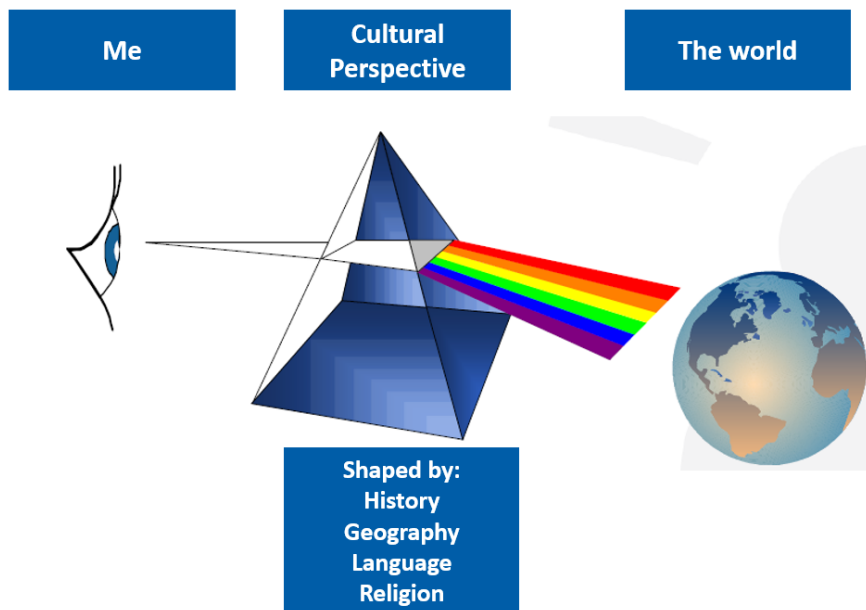
Figure IO3_8_5: Everyone sees the world as they were raised.

As an example, the students were shown a picture of a zebra and asked if the zebra has white or black stripes.
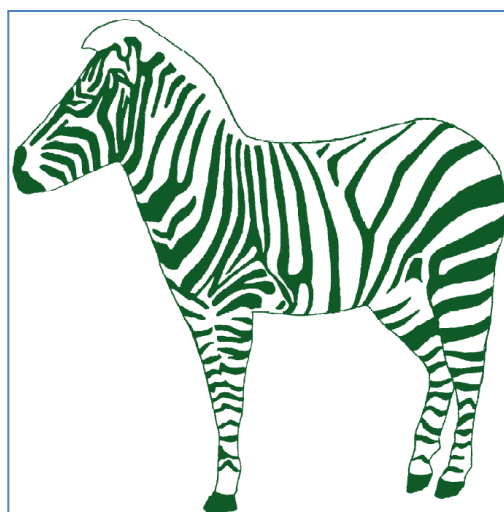

Figure IO3_8_6: Does the zebra have white or black stripes?

The answer depends on the origin of the person questioned,

- in North America and Europe, the Zebra is considered to be a white animal with black stripes,
- in African cultural circles the zebra is considered to be a black animal with white stripes (Hubbard 1996, 33).

What kinds of problems can arise, e.g. from greetings, if one does not know the customs of a country. The Win² students experienced this during the "Greeting Game" (s. Material IO3_9).

> My uncle comes from Turkey. There, the younger person kisses the older person's hand and then moves it to their own forehead.

> I come from Germany. We greet each other with by shaking hands.

> In the Netherlands, they hug and kiss each other on the cheek three times.

> In New Zealand, they greet each other by touching noses and then rubbing them together.

> My grandfather is from Poland. He greets women of the same age by gallantly kissing their hand.

> In India, they press their palms together in front of their bodies and bow slightly.

Figure IO3_8_7: Different countries, different greeting rituals (Image: IÖB)

After the game strategies were discussed on how to avoid such problems, in order to prepare for a stay abroad or the welcome of a foreign business guest.

> Did you know that in Bulgaria one agrees (saying "yes") – in contrast to Western conventions – by shaking their head? And "no" is expressed by nodding twice?

Cultural Differences in Business

The subject of intercultural skills was then related to business life.

Using the caricatures (figures IO3_8_8 and IO3_8_9), the students learned cultural differences in business life using two examples from the world of business.

Example 1: Different use of hierarchies (see figure IO3_8_8); is often expressed in, e.g.

- addressing people,
- expressing criticism,
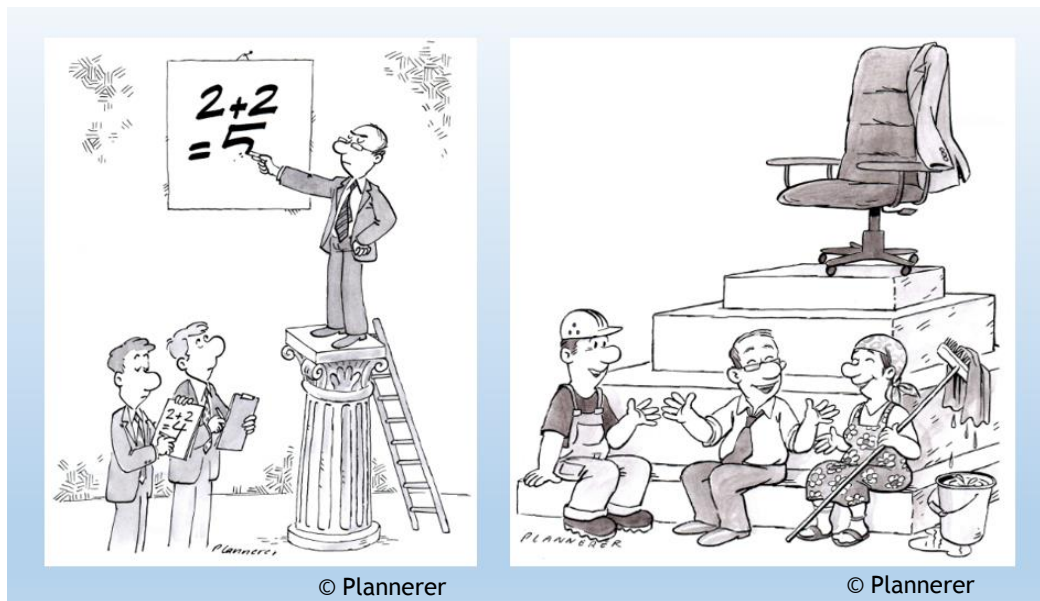- style of dress,
- giving instructions.

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Figure IO3_8_8: Hierarchies in business life

Example 2: The separation of the business and private life (see figure IO3_8_9).

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Figure IO3_8_9: Separation of business and private in the workplace

Separation or no separation of business and private?	
More separation Countries: e.g. Germany, the Netherlands	Little separation Countries: Bulgaria, Poland, Italy
Examples from daily business life: Private and professional more separated: One talks about business subjects but rarely about private subjects. ⬇ People appear cold and distant in the workplace ⬇ Remember that private subjects can cause irritation in the workplace.	*Examples from daily business life:* Private and business is mixed, interpersonal closeness is important. Private things are talked about in the office. ⬇ People appear sociable and easy-going. ⬇ Remember that the strict separation of business and private (e.g. no small talk on private topics at the workplace) can cause irritation!

The students reflected on the meaning of intercultural skills by means of the short film "Intercultural Skills". (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToOiAiqEvrE). At the end there was time for reflection. The students formulated examples for the categories *Knowledge - Attitude - Behaviour* (see Figure IO3_21_10), which are important for intercultural coexistence.

Figure IO3_8_10: What does "Intercultural Skills" mean
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToOiAiqEvrE

The students and lecturers defined the most important criteria for intercultural skills:

- See myself from the outside: I am aware that I am influenced by my culture.
- I try to see the world with different eyes.
- I know that human behavior can also be distinguished by its cultural influence.
- We meet the others with respect.
- We know there are prejudices that are not necessarily correct!
- Other countries, other customs: "Close your mouth and open your eyes!"

Material 9_Lehrkraft:
Intercultural exercises: Cultural Differences and Greeting Rituals

(Source: Losche 2000 and DPSG Köln)

Using this game, students learn different forms of greetings and behaviour and experience up close what problems ignorance of these differences can cause.

Participants:	The more, the better
Duration:	approx. 15 minutes (without reflection)
Preparation:	Make several copies of instructions.

Imagine the following situation: Having just arrived at the airport in a foreign country, each person tries to find his/her host. Since it is a multicultural society, the greeting rituals are quite different. However, all travellers have received the instruction on appropriate greetings (on a briefing card) from their travel agency. Now it is time to find your host.

The group is divided into hosts and guests depending on the size. A host may have to meet several guests. Now everyone receives an instruction card and the assignment to present themselves non-verbally according to the respective greeting ritual.

Discussion aids: Which greetings were pleasant/unpleasant? Why? Were there any greetings which were incorrectly understood (e.g. as hostile / a sexual advance)?

What emotions arose from that?

How would the individuals liked to have reacted?

How do we deal with our behavioural expectations in strange contexts?

What strategies were developed to get through this "unscathed"?

Who has adapted and to what extent?

How could one prepare for this situation?

among other things …

Greeting rituals (copyable material)

You are one of the …	Greeting:
Poland:	The man gallantly kisses the woman's hand.
Russian	A warm handshake with the tendency to embrace.
German	Handshake
Latin America	Head on the right shoulder of the partner, three pats on the back, then head on the left shoulder of the partner, three pats on the back.
Turks	The younger person kisses the older person's hand and then moves it to their own forehead. The older person says thank you.
The Netherlands	They embrace and kiss each other on the cheek three times.
New Zealand	Touch and rub noses.
Copper Eskimos	Punches to the head and shoulder.
Eipo New Guinea	Silence.

Sources:

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