

Context and Background

Structurally weak regions (such as Eastern Poland or Bulgaria) are characterised by the emigration of young people, unemployment among young people is very high in many places (PL: 2017 14.7%) and at the same time there is a lack of specialists. Schools are increasingly under pressure to provide appropriate professional and academic orientation, such as education on entrepreneurship. The development of new concepts and innovative approaches that optimise the school's curriculum in this respect and prepare young people for the transition to professional life has become a major challenge for those involved in the education system.

Objectives

For this reason, the Win² project's main focus is on the question of what contribution the founding and international networking of student companies can have in terms of objectives in the educational context. It was necessary:

- to face the challenges of implementing this complex, action-oriented method in the context of divergent scholastic and educational policy framework conditions,
- to work out possibilities, potentials and limitations of the student companies' international cooperation,
- to develop and test concrete concepts and procedures, and to develop handouts, guidelines, material packages, etc. for interested teachers and schools that are striving for sustainable implementation of student companies.

Participating Partners

The project was implemented in Bulgaria (Varna), Germany (Oldenburg) and Poland (Biala Podlaska). The project group consisted of 9 facilities:

4 schools:

- BG: Private Trade School (PTS)
- DE: High school in Osternburg(OBO)
- PL: Gimnazjum (ZSO3) and Liceum(ZSO2)

as well as 5 external institutions:

- DE: Institute of Economic Education (IÖB: Coordinator)
- DE: Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg (CvO)
- BG: Start it Smart, BG, Start-up initiative Sofia (SIS)
- BG: Varna Free University (VFU)
- PL: Rectus, Training Centre for Teachers

Main activities conducted

The overall project flow can be roughly divided into three phases:

- In the first project year, student companies were founded and developed in the three school locations.
- In the second project year, the focus was on the internationalisation of student company work and the establishment of first cooperative relationships.
- In the third project year, the focus was on sustainability, in particular regarding institutionalisation in the overall school concept.

The link between the student company work and teaching school subjects, which convey economic competences, was seen as absolutely necessary. In all phases of the project, the systematic integration of practical contacts (e.g. in the form of expert questionnaires, company and career research in local companies) and (in phase 2) the cross-border exchange of students played a central role.

The main activities were as follows:

- Three learning mobilities: one-week meetings of students, teachers and project partners. Depending on the respective project phase, relevant content-methodological aspects were set.
- Participation in the 8th International School Company Fair in Berlin (2017)
- Project meeting and online support: Project partners and teachers held regular meetings. These served in particular to provide teacher qualification with regard to professional as well as subject-matter and methodological content, the exchange of experience, the preparation of learning mobilities and joint concept development. A continuous exchange as well as the provision of qualification content took place via an on-line platform which was set up by the IÖB on the basis of LCMS Ecedon.
- Creating Modules: The materials and concepts developed in the project, as well as accumulated experiences, were used to create seven modules for teachers on different aspects of content and questions concerning the organisation of internationally active student companies.

Results and Effects

The main result is the following seven modules / handouts for teachers:

- Foundation of a student company
- Student company work and career orientation
- Student companies act internationally
- The peer approach in student company work
- Institutionalisation of student companies in schools
- Internet-supported training concept
- Theoretical and practical interlinking of student company work and teaching

Information for the teachers, materials and experience reports are set up in the modules in such a way that they can be adapted to the framework conditions of other EU member states. These build the basis for the EU-wide dissemination of conceptual ideas.

Student companies at participating schools were also able to be effectively integrated into the overall school concept, which guarantees their long-term continuation.