

## **Project HansaVET** **Newsletter No.2**

HansaVET - Hanseatic Tradition for Vocational Education Training (VET): Mobility Strategies for Promoting Entrepreneurship Skills of VET students

*In this newsletter we would like to share perspectives, impressions and challenges presented and discussed during the final HansaVET Project conference.*

*The HansaVET Project was implemented by 6 project partners: National Centre for Education (Latvia), Norden Association (Sweden), Training and Consultation Centre "Baltic Bright" (Latvia), Hanseatic Parliament (Germany), Tartu Vocational Education Centre (Estonia), Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania).*

*HansaVET is a Transfer of Innovation Project in the frames of European Union (EU) Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci. It lasted from October 2011 to September 2013.*

### **The HansaVET Project Final Conference**



Conference opened by State Secretary of Ministry of Education and Science, Latvia

The final HansaVET project conference "The Hanseatic traditions for promoting entrepreneurship" took place in Riga, Latvia on September 18th, 2013. The conference brought together 70 participants - vocational and general education teachers, education policy makers, and entrepreneurs; representatives from universities, teacher training institutions, Chambers of Crafts, Industry and Commerce and national agencies from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Germany and Poland.

**Why internationalisation of vocational education and training (VET) is considered one**

**of the priorities of the EU? What are the challenges facing the EU Member States? What do companies expect from VET systems? How to attract VET students' interest to entrepreneurship? How to make international mobilities a compulsory component of VET curriculum? How to best prepare VET student for international mobility? How to guide and coach students during internships?** These were only some of the issues focused on and discussed in the conference



Inta Baranovska, Project manager, National Centre for Education, Latvia

The conference aimed exchanging experiences, learning from each other and initiating a discussion.

The head of National Centre for Education Guntis Vasilevskis opened the conference and welcomed participants. Sanda Liepina, State Secretary from the Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Latvia talked about internationalisation of VET. Vita Zunda, Artis Lielbardis and Inta Baranovska described HansaVET Project journey from the idea to final results. One of the most important Project results is the HansaVET methodology developed for VET mobility organizers.

The HansaVET Methodology focuses on equipping VET teachers, trainers and VET mobility coordinators with the skills needed to coach and guide mobility students towards

entrepreneurship. It includes two essential processes – coaching and matching.

At present, the international mobilities enable VET students to develop vocational, language, intercultural and social competences. Hardly ever or rarely the international placements are used as a tool to acquire entrepreneurship skills. These skills would help VET students to become more competitive on a national or European labour market and encourage them to start their own businesses. The "HansaVET" Project Methodology was tested in 13 workshops in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Sweden and was highly appreciated by the workshop participants. Altogether, 13 trainers and 231 VET teachers and mobility organizers were equipped with knowledge and skills for using the coaching method.

The second part of the conference was dedicated to discussions to exchange experience and good practice. In **Panel discussion 1** HansaVET and BTP participants, school heads, trainers, teachers, coaches and students discussed the benefits and further use of the HansaVET Methodology.

In **Panel discussion 2** education policy makers, entrepreneurs, Chamber representatives and mobility promoters from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany and Sweden shared their vision on how to support entrepreneurship and international business development within the Baltic Sea Region.

The Chairman of the Hanse-Parlament Mr Dr. Jürgen Hogeforster raised an important question: Do SMEs have a future in BSR?



Dr. J. Hogeforster, Chairman of Hanse-Parlament, Germany

Small and medium - sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the economy of the BSR and the whole European Union. Around 98 % of all companies in the BSR are SMEs providing up to 70 % of all jobs. SMEs are the driving forces of economic development and promo-

tion of entrepreneurship is one of the priorities in the European countries facing the challenges in the future.

However, is there a future for SMEs in the BSR? This question should be asked when looking at today's developments and how they affect the future, especially the demographic developments throughout the European Union which makes the future for SMEs quite risky and unsure.

Fortunately there is a positive answer to the above question, because today's bottlenecks serve as growing areas for SMEs and there are many of them:

- Energy efficiency, climate and environmental protection
- Construction Technologies
- Human Resources and Organizational Development
- Education
- Health and Integration
- Computer Technologies
- Customers and Markets

SMEs are winners no matter what challenges they will face in the future, because they possess advantages over the big companies by their flexibility, individuality, creativity, innovation, tailor-made products and services and so on.

However, regardless the very huge potential of individual SMEs, they can become strong, successful and competitive only cooperating on different levels - national, regional and European and with various stakeholders. Cooperation is the key element for successful SMEs in the future and has to be supported. SMEs are the future of the BSR and they have excellent development chances. This is why, the HansaVET approach to promote entrepreneurship of young people is essential for the sustainable development of this area.

### Teacher's View on HansaVET

by Jekaterina Sadovaja, Baltic Bright

Jekaterina Sadovaja (JS) from Baltic Bright, in a short interview with Vivita Ponciusa (VP) a teacher from Riga Pardaugava Vocational secondary school,

**JS:** Vivita, as far as I know, you are a professional VET teacher with work experience over 10 years in vocational education and you have participated in local training seminars for VET teachers within HansaVET Project. **What is your professional opinion regarding the**

### coaching method, which you were introduced to during the training sessions?

**VP:** Coaching method acquired during Project implementation is very well developed and perfectly applicable to vocational education. It provides opportunities to develop students' entrepreneurial skills and competencies, as well as to achieve practical results - professional skills.

In order to implement this method in education institutions additional funding would be needed. Implementing of a method is a time consuming process as teachers are often employed in a number of educational institutions and are overloaded. As a teacher who works in the vocational education field for over 10 years, I can say that this method is perfectly appropriate and necessary for VET institutions; because nowadays students' approach in choosing placements is very lax.

It seems to be a fantastic opportunity for learners to improve professional skills alongside their business skills. I think that implementation of these methods in vocational education would be an important step towards strengthening the quality of apprenticeships and attractiveness of vocational education as a whole.

**JS:** Thank you very much and good luck!



From the left: Vivita Ponciusa, VET teacher from Riga Pardaugava Vocational Secondary School, Jekaterina Sadovaja and Vita Zunda from Baltic Bright

### The Internationalisation of the VET System in Latvia

by Ilze Buligina,  
Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia



Ilze Buligina

For global challenges we need to find local solutions. This is also true when we speak about competitiveness of national vocational education and training (VET) systems. The internationalisation of VET is one of the EU education policy priorities and can be viewed as an important approach for staying competitive in broader contexts.

Innovation in VET is another high level EU education policy priority and implies both innovative approaches to the public VET systems as well as ensuring the capacity of the VET systems to train skilled work force appropriate for today's labour market demands.

Due to the increased transnational mobility in VET systems we have to look for solutions in issues of common interest. In Latvian VET system high priority issues are: the development of the national qualifications system in line with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF); implementation of competence and learning outcomes based approaches; the modularisation of VET programs; the introduction of the European Quality Assurance system in VET (EQAVET) and the European Credit Transfer System in VET (ECVET) which also implies development of mutual trust regarding the overall VET quality issues.

Therefore, one of the key challenges to be addressed in modern VET systems is the issue of skills' shortage and skills' mismatch. That implies that the links between the VET systems and the world of work should become closer than ever before. To tackle these issues in Latvia a pilot project in work based learning (WBL) is implemented in co-operation with German partners. So far, five VET institutions under the guidance of the Ministry of Education

and Science of Latvia have been engaged in the pilot project. This project relates to 16 qualifications and involves more than 100 learners, around 25 enterprises.

To promote the international competitiveness of the Latvian VET system the following local approaches are being employed: strengthening the overall attractiveness of the VET system; promoting VET institutions as multifunctional education and service providers; facilitating participation of VET institution in national and international networks and projects with other educational institutions, local governments, entrepreneurs and social partners; promoting VET institutions as centres of excellence in their own specific and regionally determined contexts.

These approaches will promote the development of attractive and inclusive VET system in Latvia; enable learners to acquire specific vocational skills and competences necessary for a successful first step into the national or international labour market.

#### **Promotion of Entrepreneurship by the Project HansaVET**

by Aleksandra Sokolova, Deputy Head of the Vocational Education and Guidance Division, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania



Aleksandra Sokolova

The theme of HansaVET project implemented during 2011-13 in five Baltic Sea Region countries is urgent and timely. As the European Commission Communication on Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan (COM(2012) 795) adopted on 9 January 2013 puts it, "To bring Europe back to growth and higher levels of employment, Europe needs more entrepreneurs". The Communication invited Member States to: "Ensure that the key competence "entrepreneurship" is embedded into curricula across primary, secondary, vocational, higher and adult education before the end of 2015" and "Offer the opportunity to young people to have at least one practical entrepreneurial experi-

ence before leaving compulsory education, such as running a mini-company, being responsible for an entrepreneurial project for a company or a social project".

The HansaVET project corresponds to the above mentioned statement and shows an example of successful practice of creating favourable environment for learning entrepreneurship skills during the mobility visits and goes beyond the compulsory education in organisation of practical entrepreneurial experience for VET students.

Currently Member States are developing their national plans for the implementation of the Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan in 2014-20 which requires attention to the following issues essential to the successful entrepreneurship policy and practice:

- providing evidence on the most effective ways of entrepreneurship education on all levels (schools, VET, HE, adult learning), bases on evaluation of learning outcomes,
- involvement and cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders at national, regional and local level,
- developing entrepreneurial curriculum and applying active teaching methods,
- enabling educators for entrepreneurship education,
- providing necessary guidance for career planning (i.e. presenting entrepreneurship as one of the possible career routes), creating supporting networks for aspiring entrepreneurs.

In this respect the lessons learned during the HansaVET project together with the developed methodology – "HansaVET Journeyman Travel: Guide for VET mobility organizers" could be of much help. The project effectively dealt with important issues of building the partnerships between countries, VET providers (teachers, mobility visits organisers, administration), students and companies, teaching VET teacher's new skills in coaching and supporting student's business ideas, applying active teaching methods in cooperation with real companies in the process of development and implementation of VET student's business projects.

## The Swedish Council for Higher Education



Universitets- och  
högskolerådet

by Petronella Odhner, Head of Unit  
Department for International Cooperation  
Swedish Council for Higher Education



The Swedish Council for Higher Education is a government agency whose responsibilities span across the education sector. One of our main focus areas is higher education.

We are tasked with providing objective and relevant information about higher education and the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (högskoleprovet). The agency's responsibilities include stimulating interest in higher education and promoting widening participation. We are contracted by Swedish universities and university colleges to manage admissions, and also provide support for student administration. Our work broadly spans the education sector and is characterised by its international dimensions. We evaluate foreign qualifications at the upper-secondary, post-secondary and academic level and different VET qualifications. The Swedish Council for Higher Education is also the national agency for EU programmes and other international programmes for the education sector. We provide information and support for international exchanges and collaborations across the entire education sector. Additionally, we are tasked with following up, auditing, and analysing processes and outputs within our sector.

At the department for international cooperation we work as the National Agency for the EU Life Long Learning Programme, soon to be Erasmus+. Our target groups for international cooperation and mobility are Schools, Vocational Training (at upper secondary level as well as qualified vocational training), Higher education and Adult education.

The Swedish Council for Higher Education is also administrating some EU initiatives that can be of interest for our HansaVET members. We are the national point for the Swedish ECvet expert team, we are coordinators for Europass mobility, we have the national office for Euroguidance and we are also the national

office for Eurodyke. We have at the department a working group with special focus on Vocational training, and are members or stakeholders of different national and international networks in this area. We cooperate with other Swedish agencies dealing with Vocational Training, where the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is the most interesting at the moment.

Since this year we are also the flagship leaders of the Baltic Training programme. We are very much looking forward working with this flagship initiative. The working group for VET is now planning for activities for 2014 where BTP could be one way for us to find synergies between different parts of our work

If you want to know more about The Swedish Council for Higher Education visit our website: [www.uhr.se](http://www.uhr.se)

If you want to know more about our programmes for mobility visit our website: [www.utbyten.se](http://www.utbyten.se)

[www.utbyten.se](http://www.utbyten.se)

Any other questions you could e – mail to [petronella.odhner@uhr.se](mailto:petronella.odhner@uhr.se)

## Experience of Riga Style and Fashion Vocational Secondary School in Development of Students' Entrepreneurial Skills

by Vita Grīnbauma,

Deputy Head of Development and Quality Management of VET programs, Riga Style and Fashion Vocational Secondary School

Over the years our school has gained solid experience in developing students' entrepreneurial skills. One of the ways for endorsement of these skills is involving students in different projects. Students generally are quite willing to participate in international placements within EU Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci. Youngsters have used the opportunities to go on mobility placements to partner companies in Finland, Lithuania, Germany and Hungary.

Soon after our student Baiba returned from a placement in Finland she started to search for more possibilities to undertake a placement in a European country. This way Baiba learnt about the project „Baltic Training Programme”. Working together with her economy subject teacher she developed a business plan and was granted an opportunity to go on a placement in Tallinn.



Vita Grīnbauma

Now, Baiba has already graduated our school and currently is running her own hair salon. Inspired by Baiba's positive experience her course mate Santa developed a business plan for opening a hair salon in Liepupe. Santa's idea received unanimous support from Salacgrīva District Council and was granted a start-up capital for its implementation.

Development of young people's entrepreneurial skills has a significant role in VET since tackling youth unemployment is among the top priorities in European Union and around the world, considering that creation of new workplaces is a substantial factor for economic growth and improvement of any country.

Our teachers are constantly looking for more ways to motivate students for purposeful learning. They are trying to link the study process and its contents to real life situations and recent business developments in Latvia. To be able to work in this way teachers need to update themselves regularly. Together with my colleague, teacher of Economy, Inese Utināne, we participated in HansaVET project teacher training seminar. Learning about the coaching method reassured me that it is essential to use a creative approach to teach entrepreneurial skills to young people.

The experience gained in HansaVET seminar gave us an idea of organizing an exhibition of students works „Advertise my company” and a contest „My company in a nutshell”. In this contest students had to develop and present creative advertisements of their own or parents' companies.

Students also actively participated in the project „Latvian legends – successful entrepreneurs” which, among others, introduced the business success story of Vilhelms Kūze who is also known as „The king of sweets”. This project resulted in a fruitful cooperation between students and teachers of Economy and History.

Youngsters later admitted that projects like

these serve as a source of inspiration and help to strengthen national identity.

Our students have also improved their entrepreneurial skills by participating in projects under the „NordPlus” program. For example during a 24-hour camp youngsters had to work in an international team to develop a non-standard business idea on a particular topic.

Practical activities give students the possibility to acquire entrepreneurial skills, broaden their scope of knowledge and prepare them for challenges in the labour market.

### Experiences gained in HansaVET workshop in Estonia

by Sille Iloste, Tartu Vocational Education Centre, internship coordinator for ICT department



My daily responsibilities at work include coordination of students' internships on national level; in addition I also contribute to the organisation of the students' international

mobility. I communicate with companies to find intern positions available for students (matchmaking) and support students and their supervisors during their internship period (coaching). The reason, why I decided to join the HansaVET training, was that the content of the project partly overlaps with the tasks in my job.

As the topic of the training was closely related to what I do, it might have been of more interest for me than for lecturers of vocational courses, especially coaching and matchmaking. In the beginning, I had some doubts about the emphasis on the development of entrepreneurial skills during internship abroad (which neither me nor our school has experienced of). However, the seminar notably changed my previous attitude. It became quite obvious that the HansaVET methodology is universal and can be applied both on national and international level, both partly and as a whole.

There is the problem in Estonian vocational education that young people show too little initiative (for instance less than 1% of TVEC graduates take up entrepreneurship), entrepreneurship is not so reputable etc. The HansaVET study materials and methodology provide efficient guidelines for focusing students on entrepreneurship. Organising

international internship (hence encouraging initiative) requires additional funding and is available only for a limited number of students. On the other hand, the same model can be used nationally. For example, our department offers courses for accountants who after acquiring their qualifications often start their own businesses to provide accounting services. The HansaVET methodology would prove an useful instrument for empowering students, so that they can create a service model of their future business during their studies and compare it with their internship company.

Matchmaking is a challenge for me as a coach and this is where HansaVET model offers help. Small businesses in accountancy are generally of local character whereas ICT professionals almost entirely operate internationally and in that field HansaVET is fully applicable.

Furthermore, from the training I also got useful information about various sources of support (financial means and free counselling), which I can analyse with my students and apply for.

Development of entrepreneurial skills will promote vocational education, enlarge the number of creative businesses, broaden students' mind and even if they do not immediately go into business, it will facilitate first-rate performance both during internship and further career as an employee.

### The Manual of HansaVET Journeyman Travel – Guide for VET Mobility Organisers



Methods developed and tested within the project are summarised in the manual: HansaVET Journeyman Travel – Guide for VET Mobility Organisers. It consists of three parts: educational programme, coaching and matchmaking. The HansaVET Journeyman Travel will serve as a guide for VET teachers, trainers and VET

mobility coordinators to help them prepare and support their students during international and local work placements.

**The manual is available in printed version in English and in CD and electronic form in the languages: Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Swedish and German on the website [www.hansavet.eu](http://www.hansavet.eu)**



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## Some moments from the HansaVET Conference in Riga



Participants of the panel discussion



Astrīda Arklone, Director SIA „Dzintara ceļš”, participant at the panel discussion



Anastasija Nekrasova, lead trainer and moderator of the conference

Artis Liebārdis, participant of Baltic Training Programme (BTP) and young entrepreneur with pumpkin business; Tasting of his products



Participants of the conference



All project partners