



Overcoming Obstacles to Mobility for Apprentices and Other Young People in Vocational Education and Training

Summary Report

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This document acts as the final report of the 'Study on the obstacles to transnational mobility faced apprentices and other young people in initial vocational training and on ways of overcoming them' also referred to as the MoVE-iT project.

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Its content reflects the opinions of its author only and does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Commission.

Background and objectives of the study

Twenty years of European IVET mobility programmes like Leonardo da Vinci and its predecessors has resulted in a stable, but relatively low percentage of all IVET-participants in Europe going abroad as part of their education. So far, increases in the number of beneficiaries seem mainly related to increases in budgets; evidence of a 'multiplier' effect is lacking due to the absence of a comprehensive monitoring system. Over the last 10 years the annual demand for mobility was about four times higher than the available budget. Each year budgets are fully utilized. One of the core questions for debate is whether and up to what level the European Commission should go on spending public money in order to stimulate mobility of apprentices and other young people in IVET. If mobility of apprentices has to be fostered and demand is higher than the available EU budgets, alternatives to enhance mobility in IVET need to be identified and developed.

In order to boost both quantity and quality of mobility in Europe and to complement the activities of the Commission's Leonardo da Vinci programme, the European Parliament voted a special line in the 2005 and 2006 budgets earmarked for the mobility of apprentices and young people in IVET. This budget line financed 3 major studies carried out in the years 2005-2007: MoVe-iT¹, which identified and analysed barriers to transnational mobility in IVET; and ECVET Connexion² and Reflector³, which analysed the conditions for the introduction of a joint European recognition scheme for mobility in IVET. Further, the European Commission in 2006 launched a call for proposals for 12 pilot projects⁴, which were to build on the recommendations of the 3 studies and translate these into concrete tools and practices. In a special call for tender, the Commission at the same time looked for scientific expertise to accompany and support the 12 projects both in the development and the dissemination phases⁵.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study, as set out in the terms of reference⁶, was as follows:

"To foster the development of transnational mobility leading to qualifications as an integral element of vocational training pathways at European level, by identifying all the obstacles to such development and by implementing concrete solutions for overcoming them."

1 <http://www.europe-move-it.eu/>

2 <http://www.ecvetconnexion.com>

3 <http://www.ecvet.net>

4 http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/calls/4506/index_en.html

5 http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/calls/4406/index_en.html

6 Source: EAC/34/05 (2004) Study of the obstacles to transnational mobility of apprentices and other young persons in initial vocational training and of how these obstacles can be surmounted

The specific objective of the study was described as follows:

“To analyse existing vocational training systems in Europe and existing mobility practices in order to identify clearly the obstacles to the more general uptake at European level of transnational mobility leading to qualifications as an integral element of vocational training pathways, culminating in concrete proposals for solutions to the obstacles identified.”

Overview of methodology

The methodology of the study was developed during the initial stage and further developed throughout the study, with guidance from the Steering Committee. Although the explorative nature of the study does not translate itself into ‘fixed’ stages, the general outline of the study can be described in seven stages with a number of activities in each stage:

1. Establishment of a conceptual model for the study;
2. Identification of obstacles (desk research, surveys, interviews);
3. Prioritisation of obstacles (stakeholder interviews, desk research, expert panel);
4. Formulation of recommendations (expert panels, network consultations);
5. Identification of examples of best practice (desk research, surveys);
6. Development of solution models (expert team);
7. Dissemination.

In this study we have enhanced quality of the results by applying the principle of triangulation. Multiple sources of evidence used during the study include the following:

- Document analysis;
- Expert consultations and stakeholder interviews;
- ‘ReferNet survey’ in 33 European countries⁷ (a survey among national IVET experts on present mobility policies and practices);
- System descriptions of IVET in 33 European countries;
- Four surveys among IVET participants (one on attitudes towards work/learning experiences abroad, one on experiences abroad, one among young people in the tourism sector and one among young people in IVET) Surveys (apprentices who went abroad as well as other young people in VET);
- VET-providers’ survey;
- Sectoral studies on Arts & Crafts, Tourism and Chemicals;

Definition of terms

Mobility

Transnational mobility is -for the purposes of this study- defined as stays abroad organised explicitly for purposes of learning (intentionality). This allows for a remuneration of IVET participants during their stay abroad, but ‘earning a living’ (as in gainful employment) is not the case, nor is it the purpose of the stay abroad. Transnational mobility in this study is focused on work placements abroad, which is a possibility that is not restricted to apprenticeships, but is also a possibility in school-based IVET systems.

⁷ See: MoVE-iT: a comparative study on mobility in IVET in 33 European Countries, appendices included in this report

Apprentices

In the MoVE-iT project we have adopted the CEDEFOP definition of ‘apprentices’, which is: “a systematic, long-term training alternating periods in a school or training centre and at the workplace; the apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wages or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation”.

IVET participants

‘IVET participants’ are defined as those enrolled in vocational education and training programmes at upper secondary level (in terms of the International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED level 3). This is irrespective of whether participants are enrolled in school-based vocational education or in work-based or alternance pathways. With this, IVET is delineated from higher education, which is outside the scope of this study. The focus of the MoVE-iT study is on stimulating mobility in IVET. Most of those enrolled in IVET (as included in the statistics) are in the age range of 16 to 21 years old.

This brochure gives a summary of the main findings of the MoVE-iT study and of the recommendations for overcoming obstacles that have been developed. It first gives an overview of IVET transnational mobility in Europe and then describes both the benefits of and the obstacles to mobility. The second part of the brochure outlines the recommendations to overcome these obstacles.

IVET mobility in Europe

The single most important driver of transnational mobility in IVET in Europe is the European Commission. This started with the PETRA II programme (the first dedicated transnational mobility programme, launched in 1992), followed by the first and second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (with 2006 as the final year). Mobility in IVET is also one of the priorities in the new Lifelong Learning Programme. The (estimated) number of IVET participants that will have participated in a transnational placement funded by the Leonardo da Vinci II programme (2000-2006), will be about 40,012. This is an estimate since definite figures for the last year are not yet available. This is not the total picture of transnational mobility in IVET. Various countries report to use other programmes as well to promote mobility of IVET participants. Sometimes it concerns other European programmes (Socrates, Youth), but also national (some of which bilateral), regional and/or sectoral programmes that aim at enhancing transnational mobility in IVET. And a few countries report other national or sectoral programmes that have IVET transnational mobility as a ‘by-product’.

However, countries are not always able to report on the number of IVET participants involved in transnational placements, due to a lack of monitoring. In particular national, regional and/or sectoral programmes are not monitored systematically. For those countries that could provide (partial) data on IVET transnational mobility through those other programmes, it is clear that these

programmes increase the overall volume of participation in IVET transnational mobility. In some countries, participation in IVET transnational mobility through these national programmes clearly exceeds the numbers involved through the Leonardo da Vinci programme. In other countries, the Leonardo da Vinci programme remains the main driver (in terms of numbers involved).

The proportion of IVET participants actually going on a transnational placement is small and does not exceed 1% in most countries. The proportion here is the percentage of the whole IVET population. The three countries where IVET transnational mobility is proportionally higher are:

- Denmark, with its own national mobility programme, the PIU programme (about three times as much placements as under the Leonardo da Vinci programme);
- Finland, with an active mobility policy (various national, bilateral and sectoral programmes) and a strong national monitoring system;
- Cyprus.

There are differences between the EU and EFTA countries in terms of the strength of their IVET system, that is, its relative share in the whole of the upper secondary education system, as well as in the delivery characteristics of IVET (predominantly work-based (apprentices), predominantly school-based or a mixed system). Given that the proportional participation in IVET transnational mobility hardly differs between countries, we cannot conclude from the MoVE-iT study that system characteristics or differences have an impact on the incident of transnational mobility in IVET.

As said, IVET transnational mobility is not systematically monitored. There is not only a lack of quantitative monitoring and research data, but there is also little research and development work going on with regard to qualitative issues of mobility. Qualitative issues such as: learning processes, causal relations between specific interventions and learning outcomes, the long-term impact of participation in transnational mobility projects (through longitudinal studies) and benefits of transnational placements from different perspective (employers, VET institutions, IVET participants). As far as 'research' on the benefits of transnational placements in IVET is available, it is rather fragmented, often focusing on one or a few particular branches in a specific country. Slightly more seems to be known on effects of transnational placements on an individual level, but this often is of a more anecdotal nature, e.g. 'individual student stories'. One of the topics the MoVE-iT study addressed was therefore the issue of the benefits of transnational mobility in IVET.

Benefits of mobility

Benefits of transnational IVET mobility from the perspective of employers

Fairly little is known about the benefits employers gain from participating in transnational placements in IVET. Research in this area is scarce. If asked, employers are inclined to define benefits of transnational placements primarily in terms of 'personal gains' for the individual IVET participants. Even enterprises hosting or sending IVET participants on transnational placements do not see an immediate pay-off for themselves and few of them see economic benefits as a likely outcome of participating in transnational placement projects.

Competence development and internationalisation

For employers, transnational placements in IVET can serve as a tool for developing skills and competences of future employees and as a tool for stimulating internationalisation. Transnational placements can help develop (international) skills and competences of future employees that are important for operating successfully on the international market and for the economic development in Europe. These skills concern (among others): learning to learn, information processing, decision making skills, communication and foreign language skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, self-management and self-development and flexibility.

SMEs in particular seem to participate little in transnational placements for IVET participants, whereas SMEs constitute the major employment 'sector' for IVET graduates. Also, SMEs presently operate fairly little on an international scale, though there are differences between sectors. It is expected that internationalisation among SMEs will increase. It is therefore important to bring the message across to SMEs that hosting or sending an apprentice or IVET participant on a transnational placement is a profitable investment.

Specific benefits for enterprises

Benefits of transnational placements for employers do not only refer to competence development of future employees, though this often is seen (by employers) as the most important benefit. Other benefits for employers are:

- valuable multi-cultural experiences and a potentially further internationalising labour force;
- getting an international touch within the company;
- new impulses, ideas and knowledge of new markets;
- possibility of students bringing in new approaches and new (working) methods;
- improved language attainment of staff;
- greater cultural awareness and technical understanding;
- improving the profile and attractiveness of the particular sector.

Potential benefits may also concern addressing skill shortages in particular sectors or regions and the transfer of (new) technologies and know-how.

Identifying benefits

As said, an importance issue remains to further investigate, identify and communicate the benefits of transnational placements in IVET. In order to stimulate enterprises to take on international apprentices and trainees, it is necessary to be able to make clear what actually the benefits for enterprises are. It is also important to know how enterprises, not involved in mobility, perceive the (potential) benefits of transnational placements.

Benefits of transnational IVET mobility from the perspective of VET institutions

Attractiveness of IVET

Transnational mobility can contribute towards improving the attractiveness of IVET in general, and the apprenticeship system in particular. Both at the level of the VET system and at the level of VET institutions and separate VET programmes. Offering the possibility of transnational placements can enhance the profile of both the VET institutions as such as well as of particular programmes, making them more attractive. Moreover, providing the opportunity of transnational placements enriches VET programmes.

An international environment within the institution

Hosting students and apprentices from abroad creates – together with the presence of own students and apprentices returning from stays abroad – an international atmosphere, of which the whole institution can benefit. Participating in transnational mobility projects gives chances to exploit foreign know-how and experiences. It also offers opportunities for exchanging ideas and experiences with partners from other European countries.

Competence development of teachers and trainers

For teachers and trainers as well as mentors in host companies, incoming mobility represents a challenge to develop both linguistic and intercultural (teaching) skills. The offset of such experiences can be twofold:

- an increased involvement with the sending aspects of mobility – motivating and preparing IVET participants to go on a transnational placement;
- getting mobile themselves, using the opportunities of e.g. the Leonardo da Vinci programme for a stay abroad.

Such ‘effects’ are important, since teachers and trainers play a pivotal role in further enhancing the transnational mobility of IVET participants.

Benchmarking

Through the contact with students and apprentices from other countries, or by sending their own students and apprentices on placements in companies abroad, VET-institutions have the possibility to compare and match their performance in teaching and learning against performances and expectations in other countries. This can contribute towards the development of personal and vocational skills of their own students as well as their performance. It can also be a source for pedagogical innovation.

Pro-active internationalisation strategies and policies

Many VET institutions establish partnerships with similar institutions abroad in order to carry out mobility projects. If initial experiences are good, often the collaboration continues. For VET institutions this often is the first step towards the internationalisation process, in which the management becomes convinced of the importance of international cooperation, which in its turn is the first step towards developing more comprehensive internationalisation policies and strategies for the own institution.

VET institutions as 'knowledge centres'

Internationalisation or globalisation is reality for business and industry. This needs to be reflected in the policies and programmes of VET institutions. They have to change from 'traditional schools', to 'knowledge centres' that engage directly with enterprises, that can deliver tailored training pathways and that can participate in development activities. Participation in transnational mobility projects is part of this process. It helps VET institutions to learn to adapt curricula to the needs of the global labour market and it increases the openness of the institution towards its professional environment, including the international labour market.

Benefits of transnational IVET mobility from the perspective of IVET participants

Triple competence development

The merit of transnational mobility lies first and foremost in the development of European citizenship by individual IVET participants and in their acquisition of vocational, international and personal skills. More precisely it concerns: concrete vocational or professional skills, International skills and personal skills and competences.

Benefits according to IVET participants

IVET participants themselves, who have been on a transnational placement, state the following benefits:

- Increased cultural awareness;
- Increased language ability;
- Increased self-confidence;
- Willingness to go again;
- Understanding other countries in Europe;
- Improved communication skills;
- Work relationships;
- Personal relations;
- More motivated to complete the study;
- Increased interest in other people;
- Expected positive impact on career opportunities;
- Improved vocational knowledge.

The question of course is, if all parties involved do in principle benefit from transnational mobility, why – on a proportional basis - doesn't the participation in transnational mobility by young people in IVET increase substantially? Which are the obstacles for going on a transnational placement? And which are the obstacles for either sending or hosting IVET participants on such placements?

Obstacles to mobility

Obstacles to transnational IVET mobility from the perspective of employers

Awareness

Awareness is a main obstacle for enterprises to participate in IVET transnational mobility. Awareness here means:

- being informed about the different opportunities for transnational placements and in particular for the possibilities for funding such placements;
- knowing about the (potential) benefits of transnational placements, both for the IVET participants concerned and –more important- for the enterprise itself.

Information on (funding) opportunities for transnational placements, such as the Leonardo da Vinci programme is essential; it can help to reduce and overcome the obstacle of costs. Adequate and concise information is necessary for motivating enterprises to take the step to start participating in transnational mobility.

The second form of ‘awareness’ is even more important. Many enterprises still see international exchanges as almost exclusively beneficial for the personal, social, international and professional skills of the participants. They are therefore reluctant to send participants on (bilateral) exchange programmes. Enterprises perceive participation of their apprentices or trainees in transnational exchanges in terms of “holidays”, for which they see no need. The benefits for enterprises themselves are unclear to them; often enterprises think such benefits do not exist. At the same time, it is clear that the extent to which enterprises are willing to send IVET participants on transnational placements, is related to the extent to which they are operating on the international market. This certainly holds for SMEs. However, even in more or less highly internationalised sectors (such as the chemical industry), international placements for IVET participants might still encounter barriers, in the sense that such placements are not considered relevant for apprentices and trainees at this level, since mobility, but in particular developing broader (professional and personal) skills is not seen as part of the career development for these employees.

Costs

If enterprises send an IVET participant on a transnational placement, it often concerns an apprentice that is mainly trained within the enterprise, but also works within that enterprise. Costs incurred by the sending IVET participants on a transnational placement, form a considerable obstacle for these enterprises. These costs concern:

- hiring extra staff during the period when apprentices are absent;
- the contractual obligation for employers to pay the wages of the apprentices during their stay abroad (this differs between countries).

However, all enterprises hosting IVET participants on a transnational placement are confronted with costs. It concerns the costs of supervision of the IVET participants that spend their placement within an enterprise.

Other obstacles

Structural decisions and administrative procedures in e.g. the Leonardo da Vinci programme, but also some national programmes, have made it difficult, in particular for SMEs, to participate directly in such programme activities. There is too much 'red tape' in connection with applying for funding as well as reporting. And there is the impossibility for applying for individual funding. If applications have to concern at least a group of 10, this effectively debars SMEs from direct participation. They have to rely on mediating organisations, such as vocational schools, exchange organisations and chambers for commerce and industry, for instance. This also means that SMEs have little control over issues such as target country, starting time or length of stay.

Obstacles to transnational IVET mobility from the perspective of VET institutions

Institutional obstacles

There are important obstacles for transnational mobility at the level of VET institutions themselves. These obstacles concern:

- lack of strategies or policies with regard to transnational mobility (mobility remains an ad-hoc activity, often depending on the involvement and enthusiasm of one or a few staff members);
- lack of capacity (within VET institutions) to manage international projects (too little experience, too little time, not part of staff competence development);
- lack of networks for exchanging knowledge and experience with transnational mobility (this also relates to available experience and time and it can be reinforced by a lack of managerial support for transnational mobility);
- difficulties with finding (experienced) staff for assistance, guidance and advice with regard to transnational placements (both incoming and outgoing IVET participants).

Funding

Another important obstacle is funding. VET institutions indicate that there are insufficient financial resources for funding IVET participants that want to go abroad as well as a lack of financial means to cover the own institutional costs for participating in transnational exchange projects.

Also the lack of (good quality) placements abroad is considered an obstacle.

Obstacles to transnational IVET mobility from the perspective of IVET participants

Young people in IVET going, or considering to go, on a transnational placement, can face obstacles in different stages of a placement: before going, during the stay abroad, and even after the stay.

Before going abroad

- The information provision can be an obstacle. IVET participants complain about the lack of information; both with regard to the mobility opportunities as such as with regard to the benefits they can gain from a placement. This is an important issue to be taken on board by VET providers (which is not restricted to VET institutions). VET providers have to take into account the different target groups. Transnational placements appear to attract the most motivated, e.g. young people with already a positive inclination towards transnational mobility. Particular attention may be needed for those that do not want, or at least do not

consider going abroad due to 'private' restrictions stemming from family ties or family obligations, friends or other personal circumstances (e.g. jobs).

- Stimulating transnational mobility does not sound as an obstacle; however, some IVET participants, in particular those that wanted/considered to go abroad, but did not go, mentioned the lack of positive reinforcements for going abroad. This can be a lack of a clear mobility policy from the side of the VET provider, but can also be due to other (personal) circumstances.
- Though not that explicitly mentioned by IVET participants, a good preparation of the transnational placement is essential for a successful placement in terms of learning outcomes as well as in terms of positive experiences for IVET participants. A good preparation can help prevent disappointments due to unrealistic expectations. But a good preparation also concerns solving, or at least reducing potential problems, such as a lack of financial means, and a lack of language (and cultural) skills.

During stay abroad

- The availability of a (dedicated) mentor or coach is essential. Preferably IVET participants on a transnational placement should have at least once a week contact with a coach from the hosting company, which not only focuses on practical problems and obstacles, but also on the learning process as such and the match between apprentice/trainee and the place within the hosting company.
- Quality of the placement is considered to be important and becoming more important. IVET participants expect that receiving organisation know about their context and aims and that sending institutions are aware of the experiences they had or are having while being abroad. They do not only want to develop personal and international skills, but also their professional skills.

After stay abroad

IVET participants find it important to do something with their experiences upon return and expect their VET institutions to use and reflect upon their experiences abroad. However, such 'de-briefing' upon return from international placements does not seem to have attracted much attention until now, at least not in terms of research and development work. From the point of view of sustaining learning achievements from the placements abroad (whether it concerns acquiring vocational skills, international skills, or personal skills), it is important to provide participants with opportunities and platforms to discuss their experiences in order to let them incorporate these learning experiences into their learning biography in a meaningful way, and to help them to articulate the value added of their transnational experience.

Obstacles to transnational IVET mobility from the European and national (policy) level

Particular obstacles from the European and national (policy) perspective concern:

- The 'red tape' in dealing with applications and reporting for European or national programmes that intend to stimulate transnational mobility in IVET. Procedures are too bureaucratic and too time consuming. This complaint came both from the side of VET institutions and from the side of enterprises, in particular SMEs. To a certain extent this 'criticism' also applies to other

European programmes that fund transnational mobility of IVET participants as well as national programmes.

- The lack of national policies with regard to mobility in IVET. In some countries such policies are until now lacking (apart from participating in European programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci), whereas in other programmes the fading away of policy attention for IVET transnational mobility over the last years (after a period in which it did get a certain policy attention) is regarded as problematic.
- Given the complex structure of IVET and IVET funding in most countries, involving various ministries, the lack of cooperation between ministries in developing policies and programmes with regard to transnational mobility in IVET was also considered problematic.

Obstacles and recommendations

From obstacles to recommendations

Initially, a large number of sources have been consulted, and a long list of over 400 obstacles was drawn up. Through the subsequent stages of the project, in particular those stages in which data were collected and analysed from a variety of sources, this 'long' list was reduced to a 'top 10' of the most relevant and pressing obstacles for mobility in IVET. This top 10 is (not in order of priority):

- Lack of quality placements;
- Lack of knowledge on the benefits of mobility;
- Lack of pedagogical know-how on learning in placements;
- Lack of sustainable internationalisation strategies;
- Lack of research on mobility;
- Lack of communities of practice for placement organisers;
- Legal and administrative barriers;
- Lack of interest among young people;
- Lack of linguistic and cultural background knowledge;
- Lack of recognition.

Though the last obstacle is certainly of great importance, we have not developed any recommendations with regard to solving this problem, since 'recognition' was the core focus of two other projects, ECVET Reflector and ECVET Connexion. Since there is a certain overlap between some of the obstacles, they have been grouped into five groups of obstacles for which recommendations have been developed to slacken them. The chart below gives a comprehensive overview of the 5 groups of obstacles (in complete encompassing the 'top 10 obstacles') for transnational mobility in IVET and the recommendations that have been formulated to overcome each of these (group of) obstacles. The recommendations will be elaborated below.

Quality

Measuring and monitoring quality of transnational placements throughout the EU is a sensitive and complex issue. IVET systems are quite different in the EU and EFTA countries and also within sectors. This makes it rather difficult to establish generic quality criteria. Moreover, IVET systems have developed within national contexts over a long time frame. This development of IVET systems has to be taken into account and further inhibits the establishment of generic quality criteria. When talking about quality of transnational mobility, placements in particular, three aspects have to be considered:

- quality awareness (make actors and stakeholders aware of 'quality' or the lack of it);
- defining quality (describing what it is, establishing quality criteria);
- quality assurance (facilitating quality at a hands-on level by applying operational versions of quality criteria to individual projects).

The following recommendations aim to tackle these issues.

Obstacles & Recommendations	
Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transform generic quality criteria to specific quality assurance strategies 2. Ensure quality in mobility is monitored and recognised 3. Address lacunae in knowledge of mobility projects by building complete databases of good practice
Support mechanism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Make funding available to individual young people 5. Create shared service centres for placement organisers and SMEs 6. Use web innovations to enable match-making between demand and supply 7. Support and create communities of practice
Sustainable strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Develop strategic frameworks and make funding dependent on an action plan 9. Connect and enthuse key-decision makers to raise capital
Awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Develop a publicity campaign and use mass media to communicate to target groups 11. Use existing channels for mass media coverage
Legal and administratives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Consider legal status for apprentices 13. Develop measures for dealing with health, safety and liability insurance at the workplace 14. Improve access to existing information

Recommendation 1: Transform generic quality criteria to specific quality assurance strategies

Elaboration of a quality assurance manual (in line with the already existing administrative and financial manual) which offers concrete advice and examples that can be copied or adapted for use in the projects. The manual should be made available on-line to allow for constant adaptation and extension.

Recommendation 2: Ensure quality in mobility is monitored and recognised

Sending or hosting IVET participants on a transnational placement is basically an issue of mutual trust between project partners. However, IVET participants who were on a transnational placement, want to 'coin' their experience in the labour market. This requires transparency with regard to (levels of) quality in transnational placements. This can be achieved by giving a 'quality stamp' e.g. in the context of ECVET. In many countries such 'quality stamps' for practical training/work placements already exist. A first step therefore is to ensure an adequate sharing of information on similarities/differences in national 'quality stamps'.

Recommendation 3 – Address lacunae in knowledge of mobility projects by building complete databases of good practice

Greater uptake of effective quality assurance requires greater awareness. To address these gaps in knowledge, suitably experienced researchers should be employed to follow the development of particular projects, focusing on the areas of quality assurance that need more information.

Support mechanisms

A strategy may be powerful and compelling but without successful implementation it will remain of interest at the theoretical level only. We have devised a number of recommendations that aim to address operational challenges which may arise.

Recommendation 4: Make funding available to individual young people.

Leonardo da Vinci does not allow direct applications from individual young people. Although there are sound reasons for funding only on a group basis -chiefly the likely age of the participants- the present rules effectively deny many young people the chance to acquire skills, knowledge and experience from a work placement in another country. We would recommend making a proportion of current funding available to individuals, but without direct application to a central EU programme. A package of grants should be administered to established vocational partnerships, operating cross-border, which could then sign a contract with individual participants.

Recommendation 5: Create shared service centres for placement organisers and SMEs

Large multinational companies have extensive systems in place to manage their own mobility matters. Smaller businesses are unlikely to have the same level of support available or the time and resources to manage similar systems. However, SMEs have a vital role to play in creating mobility opportunities for vocational and educational training because SMEs tend to employ more apprentices than is the case in large companies and they also stand to benefit from widening their resource base and understanding of mobility issues.

To help them achieve this, we recommend the development of shared service centres for mobility matters that would help to disseminate information and create support mechanisms for linking potential participants, educational institutions and companies. This could also provide information on the practical, legal and administrative issues that are likely to be encountered in providing mobility opportunities for vocational training and education. Finally, such a shared service centre could help companies in arranging placement projects.

Recommendation 6: Use web innovation to spread information and enable match-making

A number of measures could be taken that could greatly enhance the usefulness of present information sources on the web. In particular, taking advantage of the ability of users to generate and manage their own content could increase the relevance and usefulness of the information provided while ensuring that information is updated by relevant user groups.

The web can be used to match seekers to opportunities. There are many different sites that offer direct matches between employers and prospective employees. However, whereas in an employment relationship there are only two parties to consider, the nature of vocational training introduces another, supervisory, layer that makes life more complex. Match-making sites in this context therefore have to manage a number of considerations and interactions.

The design of a tool like this would need to reflect different standards – e.g. from local and national bodies as well as sectoral organisations – and would further have to be accommodated by educational institutions as specific policies about the requirements for the applicants under their supervision (e.g. distance from home, duration of opportunity and so on). It would also be necessary to provide relevant information to companies and project organisers and maintain high standards of security to protect confidentiality.

Despite these challenges, a mechanism that matched information about opportunities to practical guidance to support action for mobility would plug a considerable gap in the present provision of information.

Support and create communities of practice

Create a number of pedagogical programmes within national administrations to generate knowledge of and interest in VET issues and mobility. Organisations and individuals who coordinate mobility in apprenticeship tend to be relatively isolated. Therefore, organisers are generally starting from scratch with little or no shared experience or knowledge to guide them rather than being able to develop on good practices elsewhere. Ensure that staff within VET institutions has experienced mobility and encourage experiments with mobility and placements abroad.

Sustainable strategies

There are a number of issues which result in a lack of sustainable strategies, for example, difficulties in ensuring a longer term commitment to goals and obstacles and a lack of understanding among key decision-makers. The following recommendations aim to address these issues.

Recommendation 8: Develop strategic frameworks and make funding dependent on an action plan.

The development of a coherent strategic framework would allow parties to combine their respective efforts, complementing and reinforcing each other to create a strong foundation from which to expand the opportunities available.

Recommendation 9: Connect and enthuse key-decision makers to raise capacity.

Several successful initiatives at European level exist, that aim to raise awareness and capacity amongst key-decision makers. One example is the European Employment Strategy (EES) which involves peer review exercises. It entails bringing together experts from several Member States to examine the success of policies and to investigate the options, which can enable the introduction of policies in Member States who face similar challenges. On the issue of mobility of apprentices and other IVET students, the discussion should be placed in the context of wider EU policy goals such as lifelong learning and strengthening the ties between education and business.

Awareness

Two key difficulties arise when creating awareness in mobility among apprentices and other young people in IVET. The first is a problem of communication and dissemination. The second is weak networks and communities of practice. It is vital that maximum awareness is created through channels that will resonate and appeal to the appropriate target audiences. The following introduces two recommendations made to this end.

Recommendation 10: Develop a communication strategy based on real experiences

Ambassadors for mobility should be drawn from a wide variety of activities and areas of interest. National agencies should identify individuals whose success can be partly attributed to a period spent abroad and whose profile would appeal to the target group. Their role would be to contribute to awareness raising campaigns that demonstrate the real benefits of training placements abroad.

Recommendation 11: Develop a publicity campaign and use mass media to communicate to target groups

To reach the large number of potential candidates for work placements and similar opportunities, large scale campaigns across all media are essential. A communication/media plan should be developed by the Commission in consultation with national agencies so that the impact of particular campaigns can be maximised for each country.

Legal and administrative obstacles

There are a number of overlapping laws and regulations that have an impact on the ability to pursue and provide cross-border apprenticeships and placements within the EU. These include issues relating to residency, health, safety and liability insurance in the workplace and other problems related to legal and administrative issues. While apprenticeships and placements are highly regulated and well integrated part of the IVET system in most countries, legal problems and inconsistencies concerning apprenticeships and placements only occur the moment borders are crossed, then the legal situation for young people engaged in apprenticeships and placements becomes complex. Some forms of placement are defined as employment, others as purely education. This means that creating and pursuing apprenticeships and placements can be a bureaucratic and legalistic process.

Recommendation 12: Consider legal status for apprentices

If the mobility project is organised as a work placement in a private or public company and is remunerated, the participant is conferred the status of an employee (worker). If the stay is organised as a work placement and the participant does not receive any remuneration, he or she has no clearly defined social and legal status in relation to some crucial issues at any workplace. For this reason, there is a need to provide a sufficiently broad definition of 'worker' so that insurance cover could be extended to apprenticeship work and placements.

Recommendation 13: Develop measures for dealing with health, safety and liability insurance at the workplace

Until a separate legal status for apprentices is feasible, other measures for dealing with the risks of having a foreign apprentice on a placement should be taken.

Recommendation 14: Tailor existing information on residence and visa applications.

Providing young people with access to information in one place, and in an easy-to-use format is essential to help them understand the possibilities for pursuing vocational training in other Member States. Much of this information already exists, but it is not available in one place, or of consistent quality.

Actions for stakeholders

Recommendations are one thing; action is another. If we want to ensure that action is taken in order to implement the recommendations and remove the obstacles that apparently still exist for transnational mobility in IVET, stakeholders have to take up their responsibility and 'act'. Of course, the MoVE-iT project first and foremost concerns actions that can be taken at the European level, i.e. the European Commission. However, many more stakeholders operate in the area of IVET and transnational mobility in IVET. Therefore, 'recommendations' for actions to be undertaken by them are included here.

The European Commission

The European Commission can play a role in stimulating mobility of apprentices and other young people in IVET. The EC can take the following steps:

- Provide more finances to promote mobility in countries where no national or sectoral finances exist currently;
- Collect data on mobility progress and trends identified through a sound monitoring system across Europe, addressing all mobility, not only EU-funded programs;
- Promote national policy making on IVET mobility in European countries through agreements in the Council;
- Initiate joint policy making between DG Education and DG Employment;
- Stimulating social dialogue on mobility;
- Tools to mitigate risks for those involved in the mobility experience (i.e. insurance, support letters, legal bases);
- Synthesize and disseminate results of mobility experiences (tools, good practices);
- Initiate strategic studies on mobility issues, such as quality assurance, from a European perspective.

Social partners at European level

Social partners are well positioned to support the drive to encourage mobility among apprentices and other young people in IVET. The joint document compiled by the EU level social partners entitled, 'Feedback from the European Social Partners as Part of the Consultation on the Commission's Memorandum on Lifelong Learning' indicates that the social partners are very aware of the key position they hold. The social partners could be more proactive and in particular, the sectoral organisations at European level could support the mobility of apprentices and young people in IVET by undertaking the following initiatives:

- Agenda setting and promoting social dialogue on IVET mobility⁸;
- Initiate and finance research on benefits, on potential future profit of mobility in sectors and branches;
- Start monitoring to bring sector funded mobility figures on the table;
- Develop a strategic action plan on IVET mobility, together with and regarding the key sectors;
- Collect and spread good practices, instruments and products from the branch and sector practice reality.

National ministries

In addition to supporting the initiatives of the EC, national authorities can also play a role in stimulating mobility of apprentices and other young people in IVET, mainly by:

- Developing strategic policies on IVET mobility (a national action plan), sending a strong signal to all actors involved;
- Creating national programmes and national funding;
- Coordinate and streamline activities and take joint initiatives from relevant ministries (Education, Employment, Economic Affairs) involving relevant players from the world of VET providers and employment;
- Promote a legal basis for inclusion of transnational placements in VET-curricula. Part of this concerns a regulation concerning the recognition, validation and certification for competences and learning outcomes in countries, sectors and branches where these currently do not operate;
- Conducting research on benefits, obstacles and solutions for mobility;
- Establishing zones of mutual trust between different national intermediate bodies and establishing memoranda of understanding between different countries.

⁸ As was done during the Mobility event 14th of September 2006 in Brussels:
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/sectoral_en.htm.

Institutions: Enterprises and VET Providers

Actors within this category include enterprises and employers, VET providers and also intermediary organisations such as branch and sectoral networks, employment services and chambers of commerce. The following introduces each set of actors.

Enterprises and Employers

Assuming that action will be taken at this intermediate level, employers have a role to play. They can support mobility of apprentices and other young people in IVET, by:

- Increase opportunities to receive apprentices from abroad and send trainees abroad;
- Develop competencies of workplace instructors (both in SMEs and larger companies) to give guidance to apprentices from abroad (e.g. by training or sending instructors abroad for short periods);
- Creating, supporting and/or expanding shared service centres for placements (abroad);
- Form strategic alliances and networks with providers of education and other enterprises, in order to improve quality and availability of placements;
- Share information about the benefits and Return on Investment of transnational placements, in order to create more awareness.

VET-providers

Europe is characterised by a wide variety of education and training systems. Differences range from the average age of apprentices, through the length and structure of IVET courses, to the number of participants enrolled in IVET, to the range and number of IVET courses offered. Also, the way in which VET-providers are organised differs to a large degree. However all countries in Europe are confronted with similar challenges, i.e. a lack of industry training positions and a lack of interest among capable young people to undergo IVET. The role of VET as an actor is to help create a competitive and cohesive society, by producing a highly-skilled workforce that is able to respond to the demands for adaptive skills in the knowledge economy.

VET-providers can play an important role in stimulating mobility. Their main contributions lie in:

- Development of an internationalisation and mobility strategy, linked with quality internal infrastructure and funding;
- Increase the level of competences among staff needed for organising mobility;
- Pro-active communication towards learners, thus increasing awareness amongst students that placements abroad are an opportunity for all;
- Invest in long term transnational partnerships, creating formal basis for co-operation and exchange of learners and companies for quality placements;
- Implement a quality assurance system for placements and recognition of the acquired skills abroad;
- Ensuring that staff of the institution has experienced mobility themselves;

Intermediary organisations

An intermediary organisation can serve as a link between schools and employers. It can be a single organisation, a newly created non-profit, a commercial company or a collaboration between several institutions in a community. They can provide face-to-face contact and advice, or mainly provide service on-line.

The role of the intermediary can be to connect schools, enterprises, youth organisations with workplaces and community resources. The following structures serve as examples of intermediary organisations: existing transnational networks and partnerships of VET providers and employers, branch and sectoral networks and national agencies (in a revised role from the current situation). Examples from the world of employment include; Chambers of skilled crafts and chambers of commerce, training centres, structures responsible for managing training funds, business organisations, national agencies, job vacancy websites, temporary work agencies and Public Employment Services. It has to be defined on a case by case basis, according to the Member State context.

Some of the benefits of arranging mobility through intermediary organisations are an accumulation of knowledge on European mobility, improved professionalism, and an increased number of transactions at lower costs (cost reduction or even profit making) and a 'single contact point' for different stakeholders.

Intermediary organisations can support the mobility of apprentices and other young people in IVET, mainly through:

- Administration of placements and organising support for apprentices and other IVET participants in a placement abroad;
- Assistance in organising mobility, in all phases (preparation, during stay and debriefing);
- Support newcomers through relevant tools, networks and experiences (i.e. by forming communities of practice, training);
- Assistance in quality assurance;
- Assistance in finding complementary resources;
- Communication: awareness raising of the benefits of mobility for all actors (IVET participants, schools, employers) and promoting mobility opportunities;
- Establishing zones of mutual trust between different national intermediate bodies and establishing memoranda of understanding between different countries;

Further information

The MoVE-iT study resulted in this Summary Report, a Final report and a number of supporting studies, as well as a large number of products to support actors in developing mobility for apprentices. A number of organisations have committed themselves to enhance the level of attention to the specific needs of apprentices and other young people in VET; their position papers have been added to the reports. All materials are available on the project website, at: <http://www.europe-move-it.eu>.

Below we have listed all the supporting studies and materials that were produced in 2006 by the MoVE-iT consortium.

MoVE-iT: a comparative study on mobility in IVET in 33 European Countries (the Refernet survey)

Synthesis report

Country reports on mobility in IVET Europe:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.

MoVE-iT: Supporting Studies

Specific obstacles and solutions

Legal barriers and solutions, Awareness and Communication: a brand plan, Use of portals for match-making mechanisms

Case studies on alternative programs for mobility

Bilateral Exchange Programs in VET

Sector studies

Mobility in the Tourism sector, the Chemicals sector, the Arts & Crafts sector (with focus on SMEs)

Studies on mobility outside Europe for comparative purposes

Country reports on IVET mobility outside Europe: Canada, Multilateral agreement for mobility in VET: Red Seal (Canada)

Stakeholder perspectives

Stakeholder views: The will to support mobility at EU level, Perspectives from CEE, Statement EUNEC, Statement EfVET, Statements from various sources

Inventories of existing tools and literature

Summary literature review on obstacles and recommendations, Overview good practices

Overview EU supported tools, Overview existing guidebooks for apprentices, enterprises and VET-providers, Overview websites on placements and mobility support

Survey reports

Survey: VET providers' views, Survey: Views from apprentices and other young people in VET (based on several surveys)

MoVE-iT: Blueprints for solutions

Toolkits for VET-providers (schools, training centres), Enterprises and Apprentices.

move it

***Working together to accelerate
mobility for Europe's apprentices.***



Directorate-General for Education and Culture



European Year of Workers' Mobility 2006