

BRIDGE

Bridging the Gap - Youth Work-Based Learning Cooperation with the Western Balkans

Practice Enterprise Work Plan and Program

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1. What is a Practice Enterprise?

Practice Enterprise (PE) is an innovative teaching model in which acquired theoretical knowledge from various fields is applied through practical work in the company. The model makes it possible to simulate the flows that are regular in a real company with different degrees of difficulty and thus become transparent for the learning process.

Practice Enterprise is suitable for acquiring and further improving theoretical and practical knowledge in various fields (economics, finance, accounting, banking, finance, law, administration, etc.), developing key competencies, as well as forms of behavior in all entrepreneurial structures, from employee to entrepreneur. The strength of the Practice Enterprise lies in the contact with the public. As companies in a real market economy, in the same way, Practice Enterprises maintain business relationships with each other. In this way, students make contact with the economic culture of their partners in the country and abroad.

2. Similarity to real businesses

There is no real transfer of goods and money, but trade transactions and financial exchanges take place in real terms: orders are given, invoices are issued and payments are transferred, financial records are maintained, including information about creditors, debtors, stockholders, etc. The Practice Enterprise researches the market, advertises, buys raw materials, transports, supplies, plans, produces simulated goods, sells simulated products or services, and pays salaries, taxes, benefits, etc. The simulated company provides trainees with the necessary skills and knowledge to become entrepreneurs or find a job after completing their work at a practice enterprise. PE training at school fosters entrepreneurial attitudes and skills among young people. It offers practical training in: administration, computer skills, marketing and sales, procurement, entrepreneurship and foreign language. Students have the opportunity to develop essential skills such as: interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, planning and organizing skills and many others.

3. Jobs that are simulated in the Practice Enterprise

Under the guidance of a coach or trainers and business mentors, students and trainees create their own businesses for practice from product development, manufacturing and distribution to marketing, sales, human resources, accounting/finance and web design. As "employees" of the Practice Enterprise, trainees are responsible for its performance and through the learning-by-doing methodology they develop proprietary competencies. They conduct market research, place advertisements, purchase inventory, plan logistics, sell simulated goods or services, and pay salaries, taxes, benefits, etc. Each company is engaged in business activities, both nationally and internationally, with other companies within the practice enterprises network, in accordance with standard commercial business procedures and frameworks.

4. Knowledge and skills acquired in Practice Enterprises

Some of the goals of the Practice Enterprise methodology are to train the ability to take initiative, self-confidence, as well as provide knowledge on how to start a company. Students are trained to work in a team, to take responsibility, to develop self-initiative and to improve their soft, professional and technical skills. Trade with other PEs is an essential component of the concept. Companies trade with each other in a closed economy according to strict commercial principles. The Worldwide Practice Enterprise Network consists of close to 7,000 Practice Enterprises in 40 countries. They simulate a commercial environment, and as already mentioned there is no real money flow. The result for the employees is their virtual wages at the end of the month with no real payment. *So what is the motivation to participate?*

5. Benefits of working in Practice Enterprises

Reward money is simply replaced by experience, increased expertise, functional competence, and usually a reward for qualifications. Recent industry research suggests that pay is not the only motivator. Reward and recognition and career advancement are equally important. Feeling understood and belonging to a successful organization are also important. In order to achieve success, each employee will have to show total commitment to the company, their colleagues, customers and suppliers. Another motivator should be the opportunity to practice theoretical knowledge, as well as to master new skills, which will be of vital importance for the future employer. Projects undertaken will provide useful documentation that they have successfully participated in the work environment. This point cannot be overemphasized, it is a clear proof to future employers that they are not only theoretically competent, but also practically competent and capable. The third motive should be the contact with other colleagues, in Europe, around the world and in an international network that is constantly expanding.

6. Preparation for the world of work

The Practice Enterprise prepares participants for eventual entry into the real business world. It puts the theory learned in the lecture hall into practice in a work environment, and eases the first experience for the students. It makes a connection with the real world of work. Students gain various commercial and entrepreneurial skills such as: administrative, accounting and finance, ICT and digital skills, social and digital media, human resource management, marketing sales, purchasing and negotiation. PE training strengthens academic skills and achievements, rekindles interest in education and raises the desire for self-development and the pursuit of lifelong learning. Participants are actively involved in the learning process and decision-making activities, increasing motivation, initiative, creativity, responsibility and other soft skills. Learning is experienced as a natural process, primarily through interaction. Trainees can try out different jobs and tasks and gain an understanding of where different careers might take them. Through developing and managing their own businesses, participants learn professionalism, leadership skills, business acumen, corporate knowledge, presentation skills and teamwork. Furthermore, they gain practical knowledge about workplace and business expectations, thus improving their employability and entrepreneurial spirit.

7. Regional and International Value

Real-world international business experience: Through their trade and commerce across industries, borders and cultures, trainees develop practical knowledge of both workplace and economic expectations in their home country as well as internationally. This real-life business experience allows attendees to experience how strategies differ from one country to another in terms of language, culture, legal environment and a host of other influencing factors. The terminology may differ from country to country (e.g. Practice Enterprise, Training Firm, Virtual Enterprise) as well as their translations (e.g. Entreprise d'entraînement, Übungsfirma, Empresa Simulada), however the methodology remains the same.

Transferability: The concept can be easily adapted and transferred to other countries and different target groups. The coordination center in Germany provides the national head offices and/or Practice Enterprises in new countries with the necessary framework and guidance. The level of international activities is related to the learning objectives within the curriculum. Create an international sales plan, with a strategy of how to approach customers, in which target markets and with which products/services. Acknowledge target market language and cultural prerequisites in marketing.

PEN Worldwide: A practice enterprise can participate in international trade wherever it is located, seeking consultation from the national central office. Find out what customs, insurance and logistics regulations exist in international trade and prepare a plan for how to perform logistics services for their customers. Contact another practice enterprise to schedule a phone or video conference to conduct trade negotiations in English or another appropriate language. The official language is English, but in certain markets it is possible to use the local language, if both parties agree. PEs can look for international trade partners by sending brochures, emails, calling potential customers and using other sales tools to generate international sales traffic.

8. Regional and Multinational Experiences in the Practice Enterprise

In the Practice Enterprise, trainees work and learn together with peers from other countries, strengthen regional and international cooperation, language and digital skills, get a better understanding of how an international market works and work together in an international environment.

The Practice Enterprise effectively addresses the development of global competence. It develops cultural awareness and multinational interactions, prepares trainees for the world of work by training in effective communication and teamwork and using technology on a global scale. The Practice Enterprise helps

train work-based global competencies with a flexible, inclusive and multinational Practice Enterprise experience. Practice Enterprise training can serve as a forum for trainees to get a global experience close to one they would have in a multinational corporation. Work-based learning in such a global environment can include trainees undertaking 'real' work in a Practice Enterprise environment in collaboration with colleagues from different countries, as well as regional cooperation in the Practice Enterprise learning environment.

The Practice Enterprise also offers an internationalisation-at-home opportunity for trainees through online connections with other Practice Enterprises from the region and around the world, creating a realistic multinational learning environment. The global dimension of the Practice Enterprise experience is extremely important. The Practice Enterprise, through its internationalisation@home opportunities, gives trainees with geographical or economic barriers or trainees from remote areas the chance to participate in multinational activities. It also provides an inclusive model for trainees from different economic and social environments by offering the possibility of individualised global learning pathways, allowing trainees to advance at their own pace and level of competence.

One of the most important benefits of the Practice Enterprise concept is the trade with other Practice Enterprises on the national, regional and international market. Trainees have real external contacts with other national and international trainees. Trainees train their foreign language skills and cross-cultural understanding, they get to know the economic and business cultures of other countries and acquire practical knowledge about contract modalities, payment transactions and legal provisions.

The positive consequence of these business relationships between Practice Enterprises are joint projects, institutional partnerships and trainee exchanges. It gives Practice Enterprise trainees the unique opportunity to gain practical experience and competence in regional and international business and community.

9. National Central Office

In countries with a national network of practice enterprises, a national Central Office is established. Central Office staff provide all essential macroeconomic functions and support operations expected to be available to the business world to create a complete economic simulation for practical businesses in their country. This includes offering some commercial and regulatory services that are expected to be available to the business world, for example: virtual banking, customs and taxes, utilities and the post office.

The Central Office is also responsible for the training of trainers, the national database, the banking system and the internet links between the national practice enterprises and those around the world, connecting trainers and trainees from over 40 countries around the world.

10. The main topics developed in the PE course at school:

- Information Technologies: Students have to learn how to manage a word processor or write a commercial letter and other business documents. They have to manage a spreadsheet to create invoices, business budgets. They need to know how to create and modify business presentations to offer online promotions for the practice business. It will also be necessary to know how to create and update a blog, as well as the professional use of social networks.
- Business language: Students are trained in business documentation. They identify and create different types of documents (letters, emails, invoices, purchase orders)
- Mathematical calculations: students calculate a percentage, add, subtract, etc.
- Business and start-up: Students learn the legal forms of companies in their country and the administrative process for creating a company. They can define the commercial name, the activity of the PE, the products and services to be sold, the logo and corporate image, etc.
- Marketing and sales: Students create various campaigns and promotions to increase their sales. They design the campaign calendar, marketing strategy, customer service, etc. They prepare the commercial documentation corresponding to the sale (shipping note, invoice, letter...)
- Purchasing and warehouse: Students make a variety of purchases online with other PEs. They also control warehouse stocks.
- Treasury: Students pay by check, bank transfers, etc. They also prepare a monthly list of payments received and collected.
- Human Resources: Students learn about the recruitment processes carried out by companies, how to prepare a good CV, where to look for a job, etc. They learn different concepts and processes (how to register in the social security system, employment contract, payroll, etc.).
- Social skills: responsibility, problem solving, teamwork, communication, etc.

11. Organization of a Practice Enterprise

A Practice Enterprise can be organized into 2 main departments: commercial and administrative. Topics to be developed in each area:

- Commercial area: marketing and sales, social media, IT and language skills.
 - Administrative area: business creation, procurement, warehouse, treasury and human resources.
- Each area is led by a teacher. At least two teachers are needed, one for every 10-15 students. Students work in all departments, moving from one department to another as they acquire knowledge and skills.

Duration of the basic course: minimum 60 hours. The optimal duration is 144 hours per school year. Work schedule: At least 1 session per week is recommended, with 2 consecutive hours.

The maximum number of course participants is 30 divided into 2 groups. It is better to have a heterogeneous group of students, to benefit from their different profiles.

In the practice enterprise, students are trained in a work environment. Integrated learning about the market environment takes place in the natural part of everyday activities. Students do not pour over books studying the principles of business theory; they conduct actual commercial transactions with other businesses within the network in accordance with accepted business practices and frameworks.

In this didactic concept, the roles of teacher and student are significantly different from those in the traditional teaching-learning process. The teacher is the general manager of the company, guiding the students as employees to fulfill the business plans and budgets of the company. They are definitely a guide or advisor to the "employees" of the company. Students are workers and managers. Some are appointed as line managers as part of their training and development.

Since this is a completely different educational experience for the teachers as well as for the students, training of trainers requires a different developmental approach, as educators do not have all the skills needed to implement this methodology. They should also receive detailed practical commercial business operations, systems, procedures and documentation covering all aspects of receptionist work, procurement, inventory control, shipping, sales and marketing, finance, human resources, information technology, software, telephone techniques, printers, faxes and photocopiers. This practical and specific approach also requires the infrastructure and network of Practice Enterprises to be in place to deliver the full value of the Training.

12. Work methods in Practice Enterprises

A Practice Enterprise allows the use of various methods: teamwork, small group work, simulation, experiment, individual work, discussion, presentation, problem study, analysis and planning, brainstorming, and more. But above all, a Practice Enterprise is a form of group training.

Group work:

- A communication style that focuses on partnership and mutual trust.
- Students develop the habit of working together to discuss merit, to help others, and to work independently on their personal assignments.
- Cooperation between trainers and trainees in order to achieve training goals.

Group learning:

- Group work activates and stimulates the individual student, but connects him with the group through a common task and emphasizes the individual student's joint responsibility for overall success or failure.
- The method of group work enables intensive reflection and thorough clarification of certain issues because the restrictions in face-to-face teaching are released.
- During the joint search for a solution to the task, students gain a better insight into the content and remember better.
- Group reflection and discussion of the problem gives a side for further thinking and encourages the expansion of interests (personal development).
- Often discussions among participants about the nature, flow and stages of an activity generate more interest than the activity itself and can therefore be used for focused group work.

The practice enterprise should be viewed as a project teamwork. Trainees must be familiar with the social environment and require skills for self-organization, self-discipline; fosters teamwork and provides knowledge and skills of analysis, summarization and presentation of work.

13.Objectives of the curriculum

1. Increase the capacity and relevance of learning in education and training.
2. Provide and advise on key skills: basic skills, transferable skills, entrepreneurship, languages, digital knowledge, etc.
3. Strengthen the link between education/training and the workplace.
4. Promote innovative educational development (collaborative learning, critical thinking...).
5. Promote interregional and intersectoral structured cooperation.
6. Encourage the professional development of the educational world.
7. Promotion of the practice enterprise methodology for the development of active citizenship, employability and the creation of a new business network.

14.Theoretical teaching units

UNIT 1: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Entrepreneur
- Businesses and startups
- Attitudes and skills of entrepreneurs: practical examples

UNIT 2: ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- Market definition
- Sectors of activity
- New methods of employment and work environment

UNIT 3: COMPANY ACTIVITY

- Types of companies according to their legal status
- Department operations
- Online and offline
- Soft and social skills

UNIT 4: BUSINESS PLAN

- Goods and services
- Customers
- Competitors
- Prices
- Branding
- Social networks and marketing

15. Phases of work in Practice Enterprises

In many cases, training in Practice Enterprises consists of three main phases which are:

- 1) Starting a business
- 2) Operational phase
- 3) Closing the books

Topic 1. Beginning of operations planning

Grouping of participants and the beginning of teamwork. Planning introductory roles in the company and related tasks, e.g. executive director, sales manager (and team), purchasing, warehousing, marketing etc. Making decisions about ready-made job descriptions in PE.

- Trainees draw up common rules for the company in cooperation with trainers (way of working, meetings, absences, etc.).
- Trainees prepare for the visit to the real partner/mentor company to become industry oriented and familiarize themselves with the partner company's operating environment (eg. customers, demand, competitors and technology). In addition, the trainees prepare questions for the representative of the partner company concerning the practical aspects of the business and each area of responsibility/topic.
- Visit partner company or PC representative visits PE.
- Assignment of final responsibilities/roles in the PE (can be done through the recruitment process within the company) and building the company organization after the partner company visit.

Topic 2: Business plan

- Trainees produce the business side for PE on a partner company basis.
- The process of creating a business plan is divided into teams or trainees according to the area of responsibility. Trainees start work in their fields and acquire all relevant information to support their field of responsibility and the entire company. Cooperation with professionals in the required fields, accounting firms, trainers, the central office and all other interested parties that may be relevant to the business (insurance companies, banks, logistics companies, etc.). Cooperation can be a visit, asking questions, searching for information on topics via the Internet/telephone or other means of searching for relevant information.
- Trainees should take into account that costs/prices for all different operations should be obtained from real markets (product prices, wages, taxes, insurance, water, electricity, machinery, rent/lease). Costs don't have to be too specific, but at least indicative of real-life situations to structure a realistic business and cost structure.

During the business planning process, trainees will make decisions on the following issues:

- Which raw material, product or service should be purchased; what price and what amount?
- Which operations will the PE produce themselves, and what will be handed over to other PEs; for example logistics, marketing, accounting, payroll, etc.?
- How is production or service performed (if there is production or service)?
- What are the products or services, amounts required, inventory, prices and possible discounts for different customers; how are products or services marketed (eg. what factors drive purchasing decisions)?
- What are the warehousing and logistics needs and how are they handled (own warehouse and trucks, rental warehouse, could be solid storage, logistics company or regular postal service)?
- How many and what working positions a PE needs? (if a PE manufactures something, it needs "virtual employees" in the factory/warehouse to do the manufacturing work; these virtual employees only show up in payroll and other documentation.)
- Trainees make business calculations for PE: working capital, equities (equity, liabilities/investment capital), possible government contributions/benefits and support from other financial bodies
- Trainees plan budgets for purchasing, sales, marketing, financing and profit.
- Trainees make a SWOT-analysis of PE operations.
- Trainees clarify business risks related to procurement, logistics, warehousing, production, sales and customers, etc. Students can negotiate with an insurance company on risk management and insurance. Negotiations can be done with a representative of a real insurance company or one of the trainers/other professionals can be a representative of the insurance company.
- Trainees assemble all the pieces to construct a business plan for PE.
- Trainees communicate with the headquarters – the national Central Office. The CO establishes a working network of stakeholders with whom the PE begins to work (bank, insurance company, required suppliers, leasing companies, tax, patent and registration offices, etc.).

Topic 3. Business contracts

Before starting actual business operations, the PE attempts to contract primarily with other practice enterprises to agree on the use of services/procurement. If the required services/products are not available from other PEs, then the PE contracts for necessary services/products with the national central office supplier companies.

Topic 4. Documents related to business

Trainees design and create all necessary forms (invoice, delivery note, business letter, etc.) and other documents; or use an existing document template (invoicing software, etc.).

Trainees plan and start operating a filing system, such as electronic filing. Trainees should remember to save all business documents in the company file system and not on individual computers/disk drives to allow access to the documentation for all other trainees.

Topic 5. Production of marketing material (procurement can be done from another Practice Enterprise)

Trainees decide on the marketing material and visual appearance of the practice enterprise, based on which they produce the necessary materials themselves or purchase marketing design services from another PE.

Such materials are, for example:

- Company logo and business cards
- Company and product brochure, price list, sales and marketing letters (national language and English)
- Flyers and posters
- Company presentation
- Company website
- Various marketing materials for special events, projects, fair, etc.

Topic 6. Regulation of financing and company establishment

Review BP with trainers and partner company representatives and/or other experts for financing negotiations.

- Financing negotiations can be conducted with a real bank representative or one of the trainers can work as a bank representative.
- The financier assesses the need for PE financing (equity/external capital), guarantees, general industry situation, equity stake, company's growth opportunities and the trainee's opinion on what can go wrong and how they have prepared for risks/problems.
- After the funding negotiations, the BP is reviewed according to the feedback received from the funders (if necessary).

Trainees have a founding meeting of the PE and register at the national Central Office and open a company account in the bank (pay the initial capital and any loan to the account).

Trainees prepare the necessary business documentation related to starting a business and send it to the Central Office – Registry Agency. The PE should pay the fees and payments related to the incorporation of the company in accordance with the guidelines of the national central office.

Topic 7: Operational period

Once the PE operational period starts, trainees start working in virtual enterprises according to their jobs in different fields, doing for example the tasks listed below:

- Produce and send tenders for furniture, machinery, appliances and other necessary supplies to other PEs or to the central office supplier companies.

- Create and send orders according to received offers for raw materials, services, products, supplies, machines, appliances and furniture. If central office supplier companies are used, the prices of the relevant products must be specified in advance.
- The ordered services appear in the delivery notes form. The invoice will follow the delivery note. PE is responsible for receiving products, storing goods and keeping accounts/stock books.
- Send brochures to customers, create campaigns and PR-events for customers, for example organize opening events/open days or sales days and communicate/market events.
- Organize company visits etc.

When PE receives offers from other practice enterprises, they have to respond to their offers.

- Making sales by phone, e-mail and personal contacts.
- Monitoring sales and prices in order to maintain competitiveness and, if necessary, planning a sales campaign.
- Monitor and track product portfolio and product development.
- Maintain customer accounts using a CRM system or similar. If necessary, create a customer loyalty program (terms, loyalty cards and events, etc.).
- respond to received orders by sending a delivery note corresponding to the ordered products/services; always take care of the logistics for each delivery.
- Take care of logistics and transport contracts.
- Respond to potential customer claims (product returns, refunds, credit notes, etc.).
- Take care of payroll (wages, payroll expenses and withholding taxes).
- Take care of paying invoices and invoicing customers. Take care of liabilities, receivables and debt collection.
- Track absences exactly unusually in the morning and afternoon, make calculations how much absences create costs for the PE.
- Find out where and when appropriate fairs are organized; or take the initiative and contact the Central Office and other faculties in order to hold your own fair.
- Prepare marketing material for fairs; brochures, a website, stand decorations etc.
- Create a sales plan and strategy for the fair; offers, select products, sales targets, which sales engagement strategy, purchase targets, etc.
- Participate actively at the fair; booth decoration, current fairs; sales, marketing, purchasing and company presentation.
- After the trade fair, a meeting should be held to review the entire process and results.
- Implementation of the post-marketing campaign for contacts acquired at the fair; entering customer/prospect information into a CRM system or similar for later marketing/sales purposes.

Topic 10. Evaluation

Trainers prepare an evaluation form for all participants that should be filled out. The form consists of questions about:

- The performance of each participant, what he learned, and what new information they have acquired while working in the Practice Enterprise in order to develop/enhance the training period.
- Brief comments for the performance and contribution of the other students' work.
- General evaluation of PE methodology and content, schedule, workload, job description, etc.

(It is good to remember that trainees can also give negative comments and this does not automatically mean that the training period was unsuccessful. Sometimes when trainees are used to traditional training methods, it may take some time for them to admit what they have learned through this methodology)

Topic 10a. Assessment of students

1. Writing a work report (Students describe what they did, how they did it, why they did it and what they learned.)
2. Creation of work tasks (Students create work tasks on documentation like those they did while working in Practice Enterprises.)
3. Daily monitoring of student activities in Practice Enterprises and formative assessment.
4. Self-evaluation; group and team evaluation; evaluation from the trainer, from a mentor from a real company.

Topic 11. Closing the Practice Enterprise

- Stop trading activities and end trading activities still in progress.
- Send a Thank-you note to all clients and let them know that your PE is on hiatus or shutting down. If there is a break, let trading partners know when you will be back in business.
- All teams/departments prepare their part of the annual report and evaluate their operations.
- The accounting team/department closes all accounts, prepares the profit and loss account and financial statements.
- Compare the financial statements and the annual report into one document and send it to the central office and instructors for information.

16. Working conditions

There are standard equipment and IT (hardware and software) requirements that need to be met to run a practice business. To make the experience as realistic as possible, each learning space is divided into different sections representing different departments of the company such as reception, procurement, human resources, operations and marketing. A PE classroom should be set up to look like an office.

Resources needed: office furniture - desks, chairs, reception desk, filing cabinets, etc.; computers and other office equipment - printers, photocopier, multimedia, scanner; Internet access;

commercial and accounting programs; office supplies - sheets, pens, folders, files, staplers, calculators, etc.; teaching and learning tools - process guides, textbooks, supplementary materials, etc.

Students should have the following physical resources: classroom furniture organized by class, office supplies (folders, trays, staplers, calculators, paper, pencils, scissors, etc.), Internet access, email account, electronic device and storage tools, accounting documents (invoice model, transfer orders, calculator) and business books.

17. Employees in a Practice Enterprises

The PE trainees are "employees" and "managers" of their business. They work in a team that performs tasks required by a specific PE department, such as finance and procurement, administration, human relations, and sales and marketing. After being introduced to their job, they spend time in each department or in one targeted department. They learn the business procedures, tasks and skills needed to ensure the sustainability of their business. As true employees, they not only demonstrate their ability to complete a wide range of tasks, but also learn the importance of teamwork, business communication, goal setting, business planning, time management and numerous skills needed to improve employability.

In the Practice Enterprise, teachers take on the role of a workplace facilitator, coach or mentor. The teacher facilitates all the activities of the practice enterprise: motivating, challenging, and supporting the trainees as they take on roles and responsibilities that are often very different from their usual learning activities. Initially, the teacher will take a strong role in directing and structuring the activities of the internship company. However, as students gain more confidence, the teacher steps into the role of facilitator. Trainees work in groups under the general supervision of teachers while taking responsibility for their own learning, development and business tasks. Trainers involved in Practice Enterprises receive guidelines and practical manuals for running Practice Enterprises with relevant business procedures and for evaluating trainees based on the same set of evaluation criteria.

18. Added-Value for Students/Trainees

The Practice Enterprise concept allows students acquiring transversal/cross-cutting skills and provides wide-ranging benefits to trainees as it best prepares them for the entry into the real business world. They will be able to find employment in the regional and international labour market, new job opportunities will arise and they will be able to use the skills they have acquired to deal with situations in everyday life. In a world of constant change, trainees will be at an advantage in dealing with and adapting to unforeseen situations.

Aware of their acquired skills and knowledge, they will be able to accept new opportunities with a lesser degree of stress. Their work potential will be much higher than they would have achieved in the absence of transversal language competences, communication skills in general, presentation skills, readiness to learn, adaptability, digital skills and intercultural competences.

Practice Enterprise supports the comprehensive acquisition of professional knowledge, skills and competences in the field of financial and business literacy and promotes leadership skills and entrepreneurial learning. It stresses the readiness and advantage it gives them to feel comfortable to work in multinational companies in the future. The added value of multinational Practice Enterprise activities includes acquiring knowledge and skills through work in a diverse, multicultural and multilingual environment, with trainees of other nationalities and cultures.

Transnational Practice Enterprise activities provide trainees with transversal skills in a comprehensive way. This is done in both a conscious and subconscious way. The cross-cultural format enables trainees/trainee development in every dimension. Trainees are able to use the acquired experience, knowledge and skills, apply them to different situations and also to themselves. As a result of these processes, they are able to assess their experiences and knowledge in line with their goals and values and become better regional citizens.

19. Fairs and competitions

Practice Enterprises can participate in domestic and international fairs. Not all practice enterprises and trainees participate in the fairs, but they gain knowledge and practice in preparation as a team and can participate as visitors, in person or online. A membership of the international network of practice enterprises PEN WORLDWIDE is necessary for participation in international fairs and events (in-person, online, hybrid) and facilitates connecting foreign practice enterprises.

At the fairs, students' achievements are evaluated in different categories:

- Best booth
- Best catalog
- Best documentation
- Largest number of transactions
- Best seller
- Best mascot
- Best site (Instagram or Tik-Tok performance)
- Best advertisement
- Best presentation, and many others.

The members of the jury could be representatives of businesses and universities.

The competitions held before and during the fairs provide a platform for practical experience and skills development in real situations (acquiring experience and business skills in international affairs, getting to know and using soft skills, teamwork, building self-confidence and practicing basic business skills, development of communication skills, development of entrepreneurial skills). The knowledge, skills and competences important and necessary for a multinational work environment are

Teachers feel satisfied with the performance of their students. They meet with colleagues, meet colleagues from other countries, exchange experiences, opinions, good practices and update their knowledge.

Before, during and after the fairs, all participants get to know the specifics and traditions of different countries, and the competitions provide grounds for benchmarking.

Impediments:

There are serious obstacles to ensuring sustainability in the organization of in-person events for Practice Enterprise attendees - financial issues, organizational (including travel, accommodation, food, visas, different school year schedules), high prices of exhibition rooms, coincidence of event dates, lack of dedicated funds for that kind of participation. Participation in competitions and exhibitions is not part of the training policy of VET providers and the funding policy of government institutions. Communication problems occur due to the different fluency in foreign languages and the access to the Internet also causes difficulties for smooth in-person and online participation.

Lately Erasmus+, KA1 program has given the opportunity for shorter mobility activities for the students and their teachers to participate in such events.

Recommendations and ideas for future development:

- Organization of meetings - training and events after the working hours of the fair.
- More opportunities to participate in seminars and workshops, working groups and campaigns.
- Use of shared accommodation, cultural, entertainment and catering facilities.
- Early publication of performance evaluation criteria.

At least one month before the fair, each company should present itself to the other practice enterprises with a short presentation about its activities and after that preliminary session, they can invite other PEs to meetings and negotiations during the fair.

Provision of workspaces for conducting negotiations at the fair venue. The space for negotiations will allow serious attention to be paid to corporate clients, and all individual clients will be able to be served at the stands.

A conference for trainers to exchange experiences and an opportunity to discuss problems related to the achievement of the training goals of the Practice Enterprise methodology, as well as providing opportunities for sharing and developing innovations, better communication and cooperation.

20. Conclusions

The Practice Enterprise concept allows students to be creative, active and interact with participants on a global level. Given that the concept imitates the real world of work and teaches students to navigate in real working conditions. It should be further developed and innovated to keep up with the changes taking place in the real sector. Constant and solid communication with real companies, training from real entrepreneurs and further digitization and modernization of the system are needed.

The network provides excellent opportunities, but all participants should be aware of its importance and make it functional. Exchange, sending inquiries, answering inquiries, transactions, joint appearances at fairs and presentations, meeting and comparing, this is what makes Practice Enterprises alive and interesting. All further activities would be good if they aim to strengthen the exchange at all levels.

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