



Intellectual Output 5:
Quality Guide -
Recommendations obtained
from the Erasmus+ Project
"Partnerships for Lifelong
Learning in Engineering and
Technology" (P4LLL-tec)

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1. General introduction

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The Erasmus+ Project “**Partnerships for Lifelong Learning in Engineering and Technology P4LLL-tec**” is primarily concerned with the investigation of two classes of ‘partnerships for lifelong learning’, namely “integrated learning opportunities” and “bridging programmes”.

The term ‘partnership’ refers to the cooperation of education and training stakeholders such as VET providers, higher education institutions and enterprises with a view to offering new or alternative learning pathways from initial training up to higher education. In general, such partnerships can be defined by three characteristics:

- VET stakeholders participate in networks that support the permeability and progression of learners in education and training, allowing the learners to engage in flexible and individualised learning processes to accumulate learning outcomes and attain new qualifications and qualification levels;
- these partnerships operate within existing systemic structures of education and training, utilising them for specific innovative solutions without changing the structures themselves;
- the partnerships connect subsystems of education and training that are traditionally separate, e.g. by establishing pathways from vocational education and training (VET) to higher education (HE).



1. General introduction

According to a Cedefop study (2012-0176/AO/ECVL/ILEMO-LZAH/Partnerships For Lifelong Learning/010/12), four core types of such partnerships can be distinguished, namely integrated learning opportunities, bridging programmes, validation mechanisms and counselling services. The first two are addressed in the project.



- In the case of 'integrated learning opportunities' or 'integrated programmes', educational opportunities offered by different providers are connected in such a way that from the learners' perspective one single, coherent programme or curriculum comes into being. Dual college programmes, which integrate apprenticeship training and a cognate bachelor's degree course, are a typical example.
- In the other type, the so-called 'bridging programmes', the autonomy of the partners is preserved to a larger extent. Instead of jointly building up a new training course, the partners involved recognise learning outcomes from each others' existing programmes on the basis of mutual trust and provide targeted provision and support for the transition from one programme to another.



The aim of the P4LLL-tec project is to study the organisational models (or 'design options') of integrated learning opportunities and bridging programmes in occupational areas of engineering and technology (ISCO Sub-Major Groups 31 and/or 35) in five countries (Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia and Spain), and to assess the performance and impact of these partnerships. On the basis of this analysis, the project has identified a number of main recommendations obtained from the Erasmus+ Project “Partnerships for Lifelong Learning in Engineering and Technology” (P4LLL-tec). These recommendations are presented next.

2. Some recommendations

2. Some recommendations

2.1. Summary of recommendations

GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIP ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear distribution of roles amongst the different stakeholders involved in lifelong learning partnerships • Promotion of lifelong learning partnerships amongst all stakeholders
COMPANIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal approval/accreditation of participating companies in lifelong learning partnerships • Presence of mechanisms to foster the participation of companies in lifelong learning partnerships
COMPANY TRAINERS/TUTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of competent, skilled and qualified company trainers/tutors as well as school teachers
LEARNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of different groups of people to lifelong learning partnerships • Validation/recognition and accreditation of prior learning and previous competences/ qualifications acquired during life • Proper preparation of learners before participating in lifelong learning partnerships • Continuous support to learners participating in lifelong learning partnerships • Access to decent working and occupational health and safety conditions
TRAINING CONTENTS AND TRAINING PROVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfilment of internal and external quality standards • Modernisation and upgrading of training contents and experiences • Permeability and opportunities for further learning • User-friendly provision of training

2.2. Governance and partnership issues

Clear distribution of roles amongst the different stakeholders involved in lifelong learning partnerships

Before commencing a partnership ensure that there is an agreed distribution of roles amongst the different stakeholders (public authorities, schools and training centres, sector/employers' associations and individual companies, chambers of commerce, trade unions, other competent stakeholders, trainees/learners) that take part in the general governance of the different elements of the lifelong learning partnership (definition of training contents, accreditation of participating companies, support to meet required occupational health and safety requirements, elaboration of training standards, etc).



2. Some recommendations

Promotion of lifelong learning partnerships amongst all stakeholders

Promote lifelong learning partnerships apprenticeship schemes through awareness-raising targeted at young people, their parents, education and training providers, employers and public employment services, while highlighting these partnerships as a pathway leading to excellence which opens up broad educational and professional opportunities

2.3. Companies

Formal approval/accreditation of participating companies in lifelong learning partnerships

Ensure that participant companies within the partnerships are formally approved or accredited by an external well-recognised/independent agency or organisation (i.e. trade committees, local craft chambers, schools or colleges, qualifications and quality agencies, etc) before the companies can host learners in order to assess i) their ability to teach the full/partial range of skills and competences required by a programme to the required quality standards, ii) the availability of appropriate technology and equipment available to teach these skills and competences; iii) the availability of appropriate employees who can mentor, supervise and teach learners.

Presence of mechanisms to foster the participation of companies in lifelong learning partnerships

Introduce support mechanisms that may foster the participation of companies in integrated programmes, including:

- Collaborative solutions for companies (particularly SMEs) who want to train learners (apprentices) but cannot impart in-house the full training content.
- Collaborative solutions amongst companies in order to avoid that learners might not finish their in-company training period due to company.-related problems (i.e. insolvency, unexpected difficulties to properly attend learners, etc).
- Financial support mechanisms (grants, tax incentives, etc) for alleviating the costs incurred by participating companies when training learners in-house (apprentices' pay, social insurance costs, wages of instructors, costs of materials/equipment, other costs).
- Technical specialised/customised assistance to enterprises, either those who want to implement lifelong learning partnerships (subject-specific, didactic training support, assistance to meet occupational health and safety requirements, selection of learners, etc) or those enterprises that are currently



2. Some recommendations

involved in these partnerships (in order to help them to identify and solve existing problems, etc).

- Simplified/lean and agile customer-friendly procedures in different administrative-related areas (accreditation as a training company; apprenticeship contracts; apprenticeship-leave examinations; subsidies for training companies, etc).

2.4. Company trainers/tutors

Availability of competent, skilled and qualified company trainers/tutors as well as school teachers



Ensure that company trainers/tutors as well as teachers have the appropriate skills and competences to successfully interact with learners. Ideally, these company tutors/trainers should combine high levels of communication skills, teaching experience, expertise in a given subject and pedagogical and andragogical competence. Their level of competence should be assessed and possibly accredited by a suitable external body.

Ensure that these company trainers/tutors and teachers are involved in continuous professional development activities in order to help them to keep their competences, qualifications and sectoral-specific skills updated and modernised.



Ensure knowledge exchange possibilities for company and school teachers (for instance, having stage periods, both for company trainers/tutors at schools as well as for school teachers at companies).



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2.5. Learners

Accessibility of different groups of people to lifelong learning partnerships

Ensure that the access to these partnerships is open to all members of society in order to wider the rich and broad diversity of the workplace. Equity of access and equality of opportunity to such partnerships is crucial.

In order to encourage diversity, partnerships should increase access to partnership opportunities for specific marginalised target collectives (i.e. peoples with disabilities, learners with various cultural and religious backgrounds, refugees, gifted people, older learners, etc).

Provide technical and pedagogical/andragogical resources to companies and learning centres in order to successfully deal with the challenges opened up by this heterogeneity of learners (in terms of age, educational background, different levels of experience and personal development of learners, etc).



Validation/recognition and accreditation of prior learning and previous competences/ qualifications acquired during life

Pay special attention to the validation and recognition of prior learning and competences/qualifications acquired by the learners during previous time periods, for instance via the establishment of a system that may facilitate the mutual recognition of previously acquired working experience or VET experiences (i.e. ECTS and/or ECVET).

2. Some recommendations

Proper preparation of learners before participating in lifelong learning partnerships

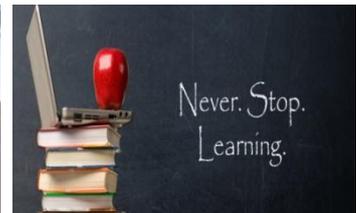
Make sure that learners participating in lifelong learning partnerships are carefully selected and well prepared before their in-company work-based experiences, paying special attention to a good matching between the student and the participating company's characteristics. These elements can help to ensure sure that learners are motivated and learn what they want and need to learn, assuring at the same time that they successfully meet the training enterprise's expectations.

Continuous support to learners participating in lifelong learning partnerships

Ensure that learners receive effective support during his/her training period, not only in terms of a decent and timely financial compensation but also in terms of appropriate guidance and counselling, both before and during the training process, in different domains (social and emotional support; apprenticeship contracts; apprenticeship-leave examinations; eligible financial support, etc).

Access to decent working and occupational health and safety conditions

Enforce that learners participating in lifelong learning partnerships are paid by the employer, according to collective agreements, or a national and/or sectoral minimum legal wage, for the period of training. In the same line of reasoning, ensure that lifelong learning partnerships guarantee high quality and safe working environments, including working hours. The existence of an "apprenticeship/traineeship contract" where the rights and duties of both the companies and the learner are regulated could be an optimal solution for this, although not the only one. Social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) could be given responsibility for monitoring the suitability of workplaces and for accrediting interested companies. A clear and



2. Some recommendations

2.6. Training contents and training provision

Fulfilment of internal and external quality standards

Ensure that the training provided both within the learning centre/school and within companies is in line with an approved curriculum and fulfils, at the same time, the requested sectoral and national quality standards.



Modernisation and upgrading of training contents and experiences

Ensure the existence of instruments and tools within the lifelong learning partnership that may facilitate the continuing updating and modernisation of the existing training contents, with a very strong practical orientation that may respond to the technological changes and the changing needs of the economy and the enterprises.



Give room for both participating enterprises, vocational schools and learners in lifelong learning partnerships to have the possibility to debriefing their experiences within the lifelong learning partnership to check whether there were any problems and discuss ways to address these problems in future situations. For instance, learners can be asked to keep diaries of what they have learned, and to record their experiences, and reactions, helping them to reinforce learning, assess progress and identify possible problems.



Permeability and opportunities for further learning

Ensure the adequate integration of the apprenticeship schemes into the formal education and training system through a system of recognised qualifications and competences which may allow access to higher education and lifelong learning and broaden professional opportunities.

User-friendly provision of training

Make sure that the provision of training is made in such a way that learners can successfully manage the combination of work-based with the school-based training, including issues such as coordination of different timetables, coordination of the involved work load, etc.