



INCOME Tourism

**Newsletter
March 2020**

Mobility meeting Ravensburg postponed due to Corona

In the week of March 9-13, the learning trios – students, in-company tutors and HEI tutors - had the opportunity to travel to Germany and learn from the German dual model, within a mobility program at the University of Ravensburg and its partner companies, maximising the learning exchange. We sincerely regret that due to the Corona virus outbreak this meeting has been postponed. We hope to be able to set a new date soon!



“We believe that dual education brings benefits to both students and employers. This system would bring about certain competencies tailored for the needs of the industry and enables employers to produce qualified individuals according to our niche requirements.”

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INCOME Tourism Webinar

On March 12th, 2020 a webinar was organized by the INCOME Tourism project to discuss perspectives and exchange experiences regarding the Dual Cooperative Education pilot. Originally the partners and stakeholders were to meet in person at the DHBW in Ravensburg, but due to the Corona crisis alternative ways had to be found.

During the webinar different stakeholders representing the learning trios (Higher Educational Institutions, Students and Private and Public Organisations) focussed on different perspectives of Dual Cooperative Education to deepen the understanding of what dual education involves. DHBW Ravensburg is based on the dual system where education and business are brought together and the INCOME Tourism project has been following this inspiration with pilots in the participating countries.

From each participating country (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Malta, Croatia and Germany), HEI tutors, students and businesses reflected on their experiences with this dual system so far. What are the benefits for the different stakeholders and what challenges have been faced? Some key words that emerged from the presentations given by students, workplace tutors and HEI tutors were: **Confidence, Communication, Cooperation** and **Challenge**.

Confidence

When listening to the experiences of the students one word that stood out most was confidence. By following education and getting work experience at the same time, they have all developed more confidence. They gained confidence by seeing that what they were studying was actually useful in practice and could be applied directly. They also became more confident by learning directly from business professionals and from the support given by the professionals, by developing their soft skills in a work environment, by feeling valuable and by increasing their future career opportunities.

Communication

It is evident that for making this dual system work, good communication between all parties is required. In getting students motivated to participate in this pilot, HEI tutors needed to communicate clearly the objectives of the pilot and the mission and visions of the INCOME Tourism project. For the matching of students and businesses it was not only important to invest a lot of time, but all parties also needed to communicate clearly their needs and expectations of this pilot. What do students wish to learn and what can companies offer? In Croatia a "Learning Trios Workshop" was set up before the students were sent to the companies to make sure that the expectations of the different parties were aligned. The procedure at DHBW Ravensburg however is different. DHBW does not arrange the matching of students and companies, but students have to find a workplace themselves and once they have successfully found one they can apply to the university. So the communication process about what should be accomplished already begins before the study has started.





Cooperation

The cooperation between the different stakeholders generated positive effects. Bringing businesses and universities together improved their relationship. The tourism sector is very dynamic and changes every day, so interaction with the industry is very important. Being better aware of the developments in both businesses and universities helps to close the gap of what students learn and what the market needs. This cooperation helps to get well trained students with better communication skills and problem solving skills and for companies to bring into practice new and fresh ideas and theoretical knowledge which the students bring to their workplace. Furthermore the input from students about the real practice can help universities to learn about outdated information.

Challenge

The pilot obviously also brought some challenges for the different parties. The matching process of students to companies took a lot of time and had to be carried out carefully, to ensure that all parties continued to be motivated. Not only the expectations of all parties had to be taken into account, but also the timing and structure for both students and companies. Also giving guidance and feedback to students was time consuming, especially for workplace tutors and even more so for small companies, but also for HEI tutors this generated extra workload. By participating in the pilot the students were challenged to improve their (soft) skills by learning from practical situations, to take own initiatives and to work in a team. Also the combination of working and studying at the same time turned out to be a real challenge. The necessity to attend both lessons and work required constant updating on what happened on the work floor while they were at school.

In general the experience of the stakeholders concerned are positive and they agree that the dual system creates a win-win situation for all parties involved and is a great opportunity to share knowledge. Students learn various (soft) skills in practice, are better motivated and prepared when entering the labour market and find that the experience acquired is beneficial for future positions. Businesses learn fresh ideas from the students, become more aware of the advantages of having someone around who can apply the theoretical knowledge and may find potential future employees. HEI tutors find that students are better motivated when they understand that the theoretical knowledge that is being taught is actually useful and the input received from students from the practice is useful for creating a curriculum focusing on soft skills and with learning outcomes adapted to the real, evolving and demanding needs of the industry.

