



**PRESS RELEASE:
TOOLBOX PILOTING**

Grow Entrepreneurship Potential in VET Institutions



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At a glance

The GEPVET consortium has developed a number of training modules aimed to enhance entrepreneurial thinking and acting in the VET sector. These are provided in the online toolbox and give trainers useful instructions and guidance on how to create training units for specific subjects related to entrepreneurship. In a first step trainers were made familiar with the rationale behind the online toolbox and the way of how to use it. In a second step the trainers have implemented a number of modules in their courses and provided feedback. The modules that have mostly been chosen by the trainers in the German piloting phase were related to the area of personal and social competences. The BUPNET team organised two separate trainer-the-trainer (TTT) sessions aimed to introduce the project, its concept and the toolbox (both sessions) and to gather feedback from the trainers (2nd session).

The Piloting Phase

The BUPNET team organised two separate train-the-trainer events – the first one with 15 participants on 23.04.2015, and the second one with 14 participants on the 03.06.2015. The trainers had been recruited previously through mail contacts and personal talks. The group of trainers was composed by internal trainers, i.e. trainers that are employed with BUPNET, and external trainers, who work with different target groups, such as young unemployed people, 50+, young people in vocational training as well as people in further educational training.



The TTTs were carried out in the framework of an extended version of our BUPNET’s Bildungshäppchen (usually an after work training format that was extended to a one-day event for the occasion) that takes place on a monthly basis in the premises of BUPNET. The setting of these Bildungshäppchen is rather informal and the aim is to introduce and discuss a specific topic from our European projects, to exchange good educational practice and to network. (Already in October 2014, the GEPVET project was introduced during one of these Bildungshäppchen events.) After an introduction to the GEPVET project and the toolbox, participants brainstormed and collected those competences that they consider of major interest when it comes to promoting an entrepreneurial mindset. Subsequently, the participants reflected and discussed how these competences can be integrated into their own learning offers and exemplary activities for these competences from the GEPVET modules were presented.

It became already then very clear that the interest of the trainers lies primarily in social and personal competences which they felt are a pre-requisite for any entrepreneurial thinking and acting. Moreover, they felt that these can be more easily implemented in the type of training they usually deliver. This interest was also actually reflected in the choice of modules that were implemented by the trainers. These were the modules on communication and asser-

tiveness, creativity and innovation, resilience and self-reflection, discovering opportunities and problem solving. Modules directly addressing core entrepreneurial skills like business planning and marketing were not used by the involved trainers in the framework of the piloting.

For the piloting, trainers were given the choice to either use the online toolbox as a first resource for the piloting or a CD that was provided as alternative. Even though trainers were positive about the toolbox during the presentation, a majority opted rather for the CD, as they felt they would be able to access the materials more independently.

At the end of the second TTT a short feedback round with those trainers that took also part in the first TTT was organised. In this session the trainers discussed and reflected jointly on the toolbox and its modules. The discussion was stimulated by an initial short impulse talk on competence development and validation. In addition, feedback was sought in individual telephone talks, as, with view to the approaching summer holidays, it turned out to be very difficult to find a third date for a common reflection round that would have suited most of the participants.




The Feedback

The learning settings in which the trainers applied the GEP VET material were very diverse. Some have used it in regular classes in the VET schools they work at. These classes have a duration of averagely one and a half hours, which limits the extent to which GEP VET materials could be integrated. Others who work as free lance trainers are bound to the demands of their clients and the time frames given. Nevertheless they have applied the GEP VET materials within their courses of various duration, e.g. in project management courses, job orientation measures for unemployed young people or in activation courses for unemployed people aged 50+. Also in further education courses in the health care sector materials could be implemented partially.

In general, the trainers were very positive about the offer: They appreciated the broadness of the spectrum of competences to select material from. Also the way the materials are presented was appreciated, to have the overall schedule, theoretical inputs and ready made worksheets for the exercises as well as evaluation sheets. On the other hand they stated that the duration of the pre-planned planned workshops was too long for the teaching settings in which they work. There are only few occasions when they have time to focus on these topics as most of them are not explicitly reflected in the curricula that determine the framework they work in. Because of this they have used the material to add some extra elements into their own schedules.

In a nutshell:


The toolbox ...


-  has an attractive and appealing design.
-  is a source of inspiration as it offers so many different exercises and materials that trainers can freely choose according to their needs.
-  provides a good overview of the competences that are related to entrepreneurship.


 opens new ways of teaching not only related to entrepreneurial thinking and acting.


 is well structured.


Challenges:

 The initial test to assess one's learning needs does not give any results to the learners. After having gone through such a long test the fact of not being given any feedback is frustrating for the learner.

 The initial test is quite long and the questions seem sometimes as they were put together randomly.

 Data privacy is not given. Trainers do have to state that they agree with their data being visible to all other users in order to go further.

 The materials offered in the toolbox are often not adaptable anymore as they are provided as pdf's. A different format such as ppt or doc would be desirable to make broader use of them.

 Sometimes texts are too long. Visualisations would make it easier to grasp the main content at a glance.