

V2V internationalization newsletter

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V2V: a capacity-building project for Western Balkans schools

VET to VET (V2V) is an European-funded pilot project aiming to improve the innovation, modernization and internationalization of VET schools in the Western Balkans.

It is coordinated by Apro Formazione and brings together ten VET schools, five within the European Union (*Italy, Netherlands, Finland, Slovenia and Croatia*) and five between *Montenegro, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina*. The logic of the project is based on constant twinning, coaching and support between an European school and a Balkan school, with a bottom-up approach.



Students mobility: on-the-job-learning in Finland

Exchange period abroad can have long-lasting positive effects

In October 2022, **two students from Kosovo arrived in Finland to start their on-the-job-learning-period in two local nursing homes** Komiakulma and Kivipuro. The students started with a few days orientation in Sedu learning about the Finnish education system. The three-month on-the-job-learning-period began on the 17th of October.



The students' expectations prior to the period were high:

- I want to learn about the Finnish education system – I've heard it's the best! Alketa Bajrami said.

- We've heard about the studies from our friends who have studied here earlier. I expected good conditions, but they seem to be even better, Larrisa Hajrullahu felt.

Getting acquainted with new country, new school system and new workplace

After 9 weeks of the on-the-job learning period, Larrisa and Alketa had more experience of Finland, the Finnish VET system and working with elderly people. They told about their feelings so far.

- We've had a good time here in Finland and in Seinäjoki. There are other students from other countries here as well, so we haven't been feeling lonely, Alketa says.

- We've had such an amazing time here and I'm quite surprised how fast we've adapted to living here – it already feels as if we've been here for a long time, Larrisa says.

The expectations of the Finnish VET system have also been met.

- I think the VET system is very advanced, the teachers are so nice towards everyone and always available for you, Larrisa says. – They also treat all students equal, Alketa finishes.

Benefits go beyond the obvious

The period has been significant to Alketa and Larrisa in many ways.

- The first thing I would say is that I've learned how to be independent, Alketa says with Larrisa agreeing and continues: - In the practice placement I've learned how to take care of elderly people – you have to be very patient with them, as most of them have memory problems and aren't able to move properly.

Rating the experience as whole gets Alketa and Larrisa praising.

- I can say that this experience has been one of my best experiences ever. I'm very happy that I had this chance to come, to see new things and learn new things - I have enjoyed every bit of it, Larrisa concludes.

- Absolutely, I've learned and seen a lot of things that were new to me, and I think that it affected my life in a positive way. I think that I would do it again if I had the chance to do it, Alketa finishes and encourages other students to go abroad on exchange:

- It will be a great experience that you will remember your whole life and won't ever regret it.



VET to VET project – comprehensive achievements across different target groups

Center of Competence in Ferizaj is proud of the achievements in the V2V project, thanks to the great contribution of the twin partner school SEDU.

- Through the V2V project, our students have benefited a lot from the mobilities. Currently, two students have a three-month job-learning-period at Sedu in Finland, local project coordinator Ilirjana Mehmeti says, continuing:

- And our teachers recently did a week-long Job Shadowing period at Sedu, where they saw the best practices of the Finnish system.

- We had a presentation about the Finnish education system beforehand but it's different when you see it in action. Students seem to have more simulations than in our school, the equipment is better, and students are more individuals and work accordingly, Minjeta Islami Sadiku says.

- The Finnish nurse students were learning about nutrition by preparing food in the school kitchen. We have that possibility as well but haven't used it – that's an idea I'm going to take home with me. All in all – more learning by doing and on-the-job-learning, I'm going to suggest we add that to our curriculum in the future, Ilirjana Mehmeti points out.

The achievements of the project extend to the VET personnel and whole organization. Follow-up activities will continue at Western Balkan schools at the beginning of next year.

- During this time, we have noted significant achievements in the exchange of experiences through the visits of teaching and management staff and student mobility, Ilirjana Mehmeti highlights.





The job-shadowing period in Finland brought the Kosovar teachers new insights.



Next steps of the project - Conferences, webinars and Communities of Practice

What will happen in V2V in the next months?

In December, project representatives met in Budva, Montenegro. Partners discussed many things and one of the key points was the conferences to be held in three Western Balkan countries during the spring, followed by a series of webinars. The first conference will be organised in Kosovo

on March 28th, 2023. There will soon follow more information about these events. Partners have formed two communities of practice which will continue to work with the main themes of the project and share best practices.

Stay tuned!

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