

## Workshop 4

### “The Broader Picture. Cultural Change and Stakeholder Engagement”

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#### SYNTRA FLANDERS

*Our third study meeting was held in the beautiful city of Ghent in Belgium. The project meeting was once again a wonderful and eye-opening experience. We had a chance to meet people with like-minded ideas, solutions, skills and passions. Our host organisation was Syntra Flanders, which is a regional agency that coordinates entrepreneurship training with young people and adults via Syntra Training Centres. Syntra has a very strong experience of dual learning and working. During the visit we learned a lot about how entrepreneurship education and the apprenticeship system is organised in Flanders.*



#### 1. VET SYSTEM IN BELGIUM

Naomi Wauterickx who works for [the Flemish Department of Education and Training](#) gave us a presentation of the Vocational Education and Training in Flanders. It was important to have some general principles, structures and current educational priorities.

The structure was first quite difficult to understand because Belgium is a federalized state that has, next to its federal Belgian government level, two overlapping structures having high degrees of autonomy. These are called the Regions and the Communities.

The three communities are:

- The Flemish Community: the Flemish Region and the Dutch-language institutions within the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region
- The French Community: the Walloon Region, excluding the German-language region, but including the French-language institutions within the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region
- The German-speaking Community: the German-language region.

In addition Belgium also has three regions: the Flemish region, the Walloon region and the Brussels-Capital region. For Flanders, there is one combined government for the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region.

The Flemish government is in charge of matters of education. So actually the Flemish, French and German speaking Community each have their own education system.

Within the Flemish Government, the Minister of Education is responsible for almost all aspects of education policy, from nursery to university education.

Two exceptions to that rule are 1) the starting and ending age of compulsory learning (18) and 2) the retirement conditions of teachers both defined at national level.



The Flemish education system consists of all the schools in the Flemish Region and the schools in the Brussels Capital Region that have Dutch as their main language of instruction. Vocational programmes within the educational system are provided by schools for secondary education, centres for adult education and university colleges.

They are supervised by the Flemish Ministry for Education, with the exception of a few vocational programmes that are the responsibility of other Ministries of the Flemish Community. Our host [SYNTRA Vlaanderen](#) is under the supervision of the Flemish Ministry for Work, with the exception of one specific vocational programme, the apprenticeship programme within the dual system for vocational education. This is also offered by SYNTRA Vlaanderen but it is supervised by the Ministry of Education.

In Belgium, education is compulsory for 6 to 18 year-olds: full-time up to the completion of the second stage of secondary school and part-time as from the third stage, 15/16 years.

The Belgian VET system actually starts at the age of 14, if the pupil follows normal progression. Until the age of 15, only one provider is in charge of VET in compulsory education: the schools, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, in each Community. At the start of the 2nd secondary education stage, the scope of VET extends to new providers besides the schools.

Pupils can attend part-time programmes, alternating work and learning, organized either by schools or by the training organizations of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Adult education may also provide courses for them or as a partner-provider for schools in some programmes.

## 2. APPRENTICESHIPS

The Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training - [SYNTRA Flanders](#) offers apprenticeship training via its Syntra Training Centres. In the apprenticeship programme students are doing work-based learning in companies. The training programme includes four days a week work-based learning in a company and one day a week vocational and general educational course in a SYNTRA Training Centre. The structure sounds very good because it teaches all the time how the things students learn in the classroom are connected to the real world. We had the chance to meet representatives of the main actors involved and exchange views about what is in it for each of them.

### 2.1. Apprenticeship actors' carousel

We learned more about the Syntra Apprenticeship-program with an innovative learning carousel. There were four tables, each of the tables were hosted by different kind of actors. Then we (participants) were divided into small groups and we moved from table to table every 20 minutes and had a chance to have nice talk with all the actors. We met apprenticeship students, employer, teachers/trainers and apprenticeship pathway counsellors and heard the story from each point of view.



- **Students** in the first table told us that they are following the SYNTRA Apprenticeship Programme. Practically they learn and work during four days in a SME, and in addition they attend vocational and general educational courses once a week (8 hours) in a SYNTRA Training Centre. Students told us that for them the best way to learn profession is learning by doing. They felt they learnt a lot more working than they would have done at school. So it was clear that the SYNTRA Apprenticeship Programme suited them very well. They felt that more they practise their jobs in real life the better they become. They also felt that they have had enough support from their teachers and mentors. During the discussions we learnt that students have to find the work placement on their own but the Apprenticeship Pathway Counsellor helps if it is needed and gives a list of potential working places.
- In the second table we met the **SYNTRA teachers/trainers**. They see the apprentices once a week and teach them vocational and general educational courses. Trainers told us that they have about 65 students per trainer. Students are divided in three groups (about 20 students per group) and they come once a week to SYNTRA from their working places. The SYNTRA Apprenticeships last from one to three years and about twice a year the trainer meets the student and talks about how has it gone in the working place. Trainers find their job challenging at times because students have different kind of educational backgrounds and groups are very heterogeneous. Sometimes students have motivation problems and would like to end their studies because the monthly salary in apprenticeship programme is lower than in a real workplace.
- The third table was hosted by **an entrepreneur** from a Butchery Company called Renmans. The biggest reason for Renmans to employ students is lack of skilled butchers. So SYNTRA Apprenticeship programme is a win-win deal for them. A lot of real practice is needed to become a professional butcher. There are about

400 people working in the company. Almost 90% of apprentices stay in the organisation. For example nowadays 120 permanent employees have earlier been apprentices. The entrepreneur finds the SYNTRA Apprenticeship system is a very convenient formula to train their own future employees. Entrepreneur told us that everything does not always go by the book and sometimes they have to stop the training and ask a student to go to school to “grow”. However usually the apprenticeship training is a positive and motivating experience. Apprentice learns useful skills like teamwork, individual motivation, working life skills and problem solving. They really feel that they are part of the company.

- Last but not least we heard **apprenticeship pathway counsellor's** view of the SYNTRA Apprenticeship programme. The apprenticeship pathway counsellor oversees the delivery of the whole programme. They help students finding job if needed. They also provide coaching regularly every week. So basically the pathway counsellor helps and supports the students in every possible way: provide list of useful jobs, advises on employment opportunities, provides coaching etc.

## 2.2. Estafette Mentor Training Programme

[Estafette](#) Mentor training program is for entrepreneurs and fellow workers who are in charge of the 'on-the-job-training' of apprentices in SME's. The training is provided to entrepreneurs, foreman, and senior fellow workers of the apprentice and staff members of the company. The participant has to fulfil the following conditions:

- at least 25 years old
- at least 5 years professional experience
- at least 2 years self-employed

Estafette (which is a metaphor for passing professional know-how from one to another') is a practical training that focuses on participant's educational and coaching skills, communication skills and leadership competences. The mentorship training is delivered in small groups (maximum of 15 participants) of different professions/companies in order to encourage interaction and exchange of experiences. The themes of the training include instruction methods, motivational techniques and plenty of useful tips and tricks. The duration of the training is 12 hours and it is divided into half-a-day sessions or once a week sessions in the evenings. In-between sessions, mentors can put to test their newly acquired skills with the apprentices.

The mentor can have maximum of 2 apprentices per mentor at the same time. The mentor is responsible for:

- leading the apprentice to become a skilled worker
- coaching and supporting the apprentice
- cooperating with stakeholders (coordinator, parents and Syntra pathway counsellor)
- developing its own skills and expert knowledge in the scope of “life-long-learning”

The themes of the training include presentation of the stakeholders, intake session of the apprentice by the training pathway coordinator, interview of the apprentice, SMART-principle (agreement: specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, time), individual instructions, job responsibilities -work schedule and communication skills.



I think that the Estafette Mentor Training Programme is really good. It was really interesting to compare it with a Finnish training programme which is actually quite similar.

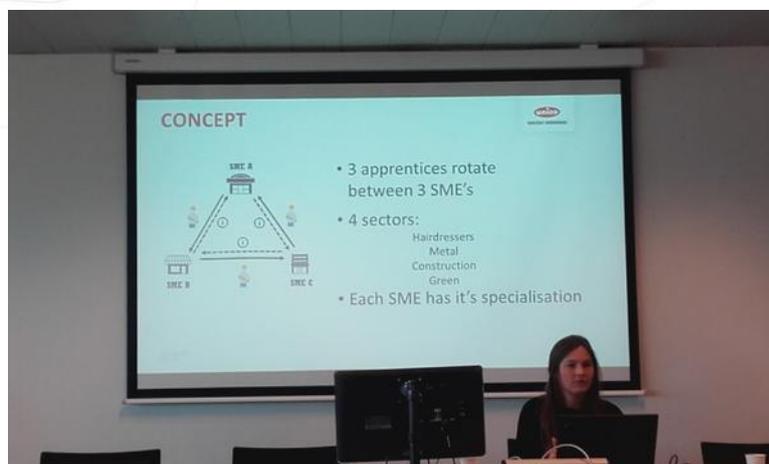
Mentoring an apprentice requires perseverance and a genuine desire to help. So it is very important to participate in the training programme to understand all the aspects of the task and to anticipate situations and needs. The reward is surely worthwhile: you can share with your mentee his/her moments of success and learn new things, both about yourself and about methods of guidance.

### **2.3. KMObiel - Evaluation as key in mobile learning pathways (Belgium)**

KMObiel is an innovative pilot project run by [UNIZO](#) in which the apprenticeship programme is experienced differently. The goal is to find out the possibilities of dual learning in SME's. The project started from the need of SMEs. SMEs were convinced that their strong contribution to the education of young people leads to better qualified

candidates to the labor market. The idea is also to spread the positive image of working in SMEs, and technical professions in general.

The main idea is that the apprentice instead of staying in a one workplace circulates between three different companies from the same sector. Each of the SME has its own specialisation. Advantages of this new model is that the Apprentice gets familiar with different working methods and corporate cultures and has better possibilities to discover his/her real talents. All in all, KMObiel is expected to have a positive impact in the employability prospects of trainees. On the other hand, SME's learn via apprentice about other companies, can train apprentice their own specialization and can of course recruit good apprentices.



I think that this model was very interesting and could work well also in Finland. This model is surely more challenging for the students because they may have to start everything from the scratch when they change work. However it is surely also motivating because they will develop both personal and professional level.

### 3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

At present, a new Flemish Policy Framework for Entrepreneurship Education is in the making. Following a thorough evaluation of its predecessor, lessons learned have informed the first draft that shows a renewed focus on teachers and school management. This means entrepreneurship education is expected to be increasingly approached from a whole-school perspective, a central topic in INCUVET project. So there's no doubt this is an interesting policy development worth watching as it unfolds.

SYNTRA Flanders secures a leading role to coordinate a wide array of stakeholders involved in the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education actions. By the same token, some of the successful initiatives launched by SYNTRA in the past such as [COMPETENTO](#) (the Knowledge Centre to stimulate Entrepreneurial Education and Training in Flanders) will remain in place and while students are the main beneficiaries of the framework, a whole range of actions targeting teachers, senior management teams, parents and other stakeholders is foreseen. Special attention will be paid to external provision with a two-fold goal: to reduce overlaps and , to improve alignment with the needs of schools. Teachers are granted greater autonomy alongside training opportunities to craft entrepreneurial learning paths adapted to classroom/school/local context.

### 3.1 Online Business Management Course

Aaja Debrandere from SYNTRA Flanders told us about e-business management online course. We learned that in Belgium everybody who wants to set up a business needs a certificate of business management. It can be obtained via formal education or vocational schools have also different kind of formulas. One of them is e-business management. In theory anyone can enter the business management course, but in real life there are high levels of difficulties because the course is demanding and has a wide range of tutorials. The course includes e-course, e-feasibility study including teachers' access and it can be easily integrated in existing e-platforms (made available by school). Content-wise, it is not so different from a regular school course, but the methodology is completely different.

The training includes both contact learning and distance learning. Contact learning sessions are 7 altogether. In these sessions teachers set clear learning objectives and discuss difficult topics to provide all the possible support. Each coaching session follows a detailed lesson plan in terms of content and objectives.

Aaja's presentation was very interesting and online course material is definitely needed nowadays in schools. However the online course was quite new so it still needed quite a lot of work to make it engaging for students and help them learn in ways that aren't always possible in a traditional classroom. At the moment the online course was mainly many pages of text document and that is not how we use to experience the web. I think that by including videos, interactive activities, podcasts, and other multimedia elements it would be more interesting for students.

### 3.2. EntreMirror 2.0. Self-assessment entrepreneurial profiling tool

[Entre Mirror 2.0.](#) is a self-assessment tool for measuring entrepreneurial competences. A new and improved version of the tool was released in 2015 after many developing stages. The target groups of the tool are starters, entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs in difficulties, second chance entrepreneurs, potential starters and 18+ students. The tool is structured with relevant indicators for competences. The candidates fill out the tool by scoring a list of statements on the computer. After that they will have a reflective discussion with a counsellor about the results. The tool enables person to identify of which competences he needs to develop to increase chances of being a successful entrepreneur, raises awareness of the possibilities of entrepreneurship and presents trajectories to self-employment. The tool includes 11 generic entrepreneurial competences related to entrepreneurial attitudes.

The competences are:

- Perseverance
- Persuasiveness
- Knowing the market
- Networking
- Estimating risks
- Focus on the client
- Realization of returns
- Responsibility /self-consciousness
- Decisiveness
- Looking for opportunities
- Future-oriented planning

The Entre Mirror 2.0. Tool is scientifically validated in stark contrast with the less rigorous profiling tools found everywhere. The tool was jointly developed by Syntra, University of Leuven and Foundation Education & Entrepreneurship. We heard that there is also willingness to get the tool translated to other languages, English in the first place.

## 4. THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

### 4.1. Foundation Education & Entrepreneurship - UNIZO

The [Foundation Education & Entrepreneurship](#) is the educational arm of UNIZO, an independent organization of self-employed entrepreneurs established more than 100 years ago.

UNIZO's main task is to

- unite (trainings and information sessions, networking and activities),
- advice (personal advice at regional offices, UNIZO 24/7 service center),
- inform (a network of websites, and magazines keeps the UNIZO members up-to-date on a daily basis) entrepreneurs as well as to promote their socio-economic and societal interests.

The Foundation mission is to stimulate the development of entrepreneurial competences and promote self-employment in Education and Youth sector. The Foundation has developed an extensive portfolio of entrepreneurship education. Secondary and Higher Education students are given the chance to participate in Self-employment tasters (Zinzo), business plan contests (Plankgas) and mini-company projects (Learning Enterprise, Student Enterprise). In line with the new priorities of the Flemish Action Plan, the Foundation Masterclasses on entrepreneurial spirit and talent development seek to inspire teachers and provide tips to integrate entrepreneurship in their lesson plans.

#### **4.2. VLAJO Train the Trainer**

[Vlajo](#) is another key actor in the delivery of entrepreneurship education in Flanders. With 28 staff members in Flanders, Vlajo, in partnership with businesses and educators, helps young people in Flanders to learn and understand real-world economics. Vlajo offers practical programs - from the kindergarten to the university - to stimulate enterprise and entrepreneurship that seem quite popular among young people (100000 participants, 12.5% penetration rate)

It was nice to hear VLAJO believes that the seeds of entrepreneurial thought and action is put into education. We were told that Vlajo acts kind of a bridge between education, business and government. Their objective is to bring together education and business world.

Lately their efforts have gravitated towards teacher training. The concept Teacherpreneur encapsulates the four expected key roles of teachers as builder of entrepreneurial environments, motivator, mentor/coach and decision-maker. Teacher training offer spans across primary and secondary education and is available both as Initial Teacher Training or Continuing Professional Development sessions. Workshops revolve around the design of entrepreneurial learning experiences, evaluation, interactive learning, digital competence and some other relevant topics. More than 4000 teachers took part in one of these training sessions during 2015-16 school year (3500 Primary, 300 Secondary, 750 initial teacher training)

## 5. PARTNER INSIGHTS

### **Giulia Meschino (EVTA, Belgium)**

*"Visiting a training center dealing with the organisation of apprenticeship programmes and the training of apprentices was an opportunity I have never had so far. Thus, the meeting organised by Syntra Vlandereen in the Syntra training centre in Ghent allowed me to open a window on apprenticeship and learn more about the system developed in the Flemish region of Belgium. Moreover, I was also very interested about the KMO-biel initiative, developed by UNIZO (the independent organization of and for self-employed entrepreneurs). KMO-biel aims to foster the apprentices mobility from a company to another in the same area. In a period where the EU Commission calls for increasing mobility of learners and young people, I found the KMO-biel initiative a great response to this purpose."*

### **Teele Luks (PKHK, Estonia)**

*"Last year in Estonia we have talked about more and more and we are making little step in work-based learning field. It was good to see how developed and good system Belgia has. How apprenticeship is organized really high level and cooperation with organizations are so good. I was amazed how good results they have in that field. Innovating idea about apprenticeship rotation, that student has opportunity to do their practice in different practice places and gain more knowledge and experience. Teacherpreneur was new and definitely something we need to start in our school also."*

### **Ivan Diego (Valnalón, Spain)**

*"At a time of transition into a dual system in VET, getting to know the people, experiences and challenges behind the longstanding apprenticeship system in Flanders has been certainly inspiring. Estafette, that short training course for apprentice mentors makes a lot of sense and it's definitely something I would love to see happening in my region in the near future."*