



THE
EMPLOYMENT
ALLIANCE

Training

Cooperation

Exchange

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Successful launch of the Employment Alliance Course at Polish-German Multiplier Event in Szczecin

On 17th of November 2016 the University Of Szczecin, Poland, the Faculty of Management and Economic Services hosted the final International Multiplier Event for the Polish-German Employment Alliance. The aim of the event “The REAL Innovation Invitation” was to introduce and, by doing so, raise awareness of the project outputs. The focus of the event, was the official launch of the “Innovation Invitation” training course. A large audience consisting of Polish and German HEI delegates (lecturers, researchers and students), SME representatives and VET providers were introduced to the structure of the course by the Employment Alliance partners. Furthermore, relevant course-specific features were discussed in detail during several interactive work sessions. Alongside this, the Employment Alliance partners as well as stakeholders of the Polish-German alliance produced lively and interactive presentations on the success story of this inter-regional co-operation as well as on the current state and future paths of entrepreneurship and innovation education (José Pietri, MindShare Consulting). Alliance partner Joe English (Meath County Council, Ireland) emphasised the contribution made by the Employment Alliance to overcome the widely acknowledged problems of graduate un- and underemployment, especially with regard to the provision of open education resources in the field of career development. The latter has the potential to positively influence job-relevant qualifications of graduate students across Europe, increasing their chances of finding appropriate positions in the job market after leaving university. Both speakers also raised awareness among the audience of the importance of transnational partnerships for the exchange of ideas and best-practice.

Representing the host institution at this high-level event, Leszek Gracz and Katarzyna Łobacz from the University of Szczecin gave presentations on the specific educational approach of the Employment Alliance Consortium. Their presentation “the REAL path to entrepreneurship and innovation education” was focused on the training resources developed within the framework of the project, emphasising its open educational nature and demonstrating the user-friendly set-up of the course using the project website. Furthermore, they explained how the course is directed towards strengthening the skillset in innovation and entrepreneurship of HEI graduates, and how it targets specific qualification requirements needed, especially by humanities graduates. Mr. Gracz and Mrs. Łobacz finished their presentation by providing an insight on the pilot testing methodology employed for the course.

One of the main objectives of the event was to provide networking opportunities, thus strengthening the ties between Regional Employment Alliance stakeholders, recruiting new participants as well as actively stimulating current and additional common actions. Therefore, Daniel Worch, Florian Bratzke and David Blunck - representing Univations GmbH from Halle/Saale (Germany) in the Employment Alliance Consortium, outlined guidelines and the importance of creating similar employment alliances in other regions of Europe using the “Employment Alliance Toolkit” which is another main output of the project made available in English, Polish and German via the project website. Furthermore, they introduced various resources for the funding of (inter-)regional co-operative projects within the EU.

Launch of the Innovation Invitation Course in the UK and Ireland



In order to stimulate the creation of specific ideas for future regional and inter-regional action as well as to foster the use of the developed resources of the Employment Alliance project, the end of the event was devoted to a networking discussion forum, which was moderated by Magdalena Ziolo, Vice President of the Regional Department of Polish Economic Society. Here, special attention was paid to strengthening the cross-border Polish-German Employment Alliance.

Overall, the meeting attracted almost 80 high-level participants, representing different VET providers, SMEs (especially creative industry sector, arts & humanity-related businesses), HEIs (esp. transfer officers, lecturers, researchers graduate students), employment & governmental development agencies as well as non-government organizations (societies, clusters, foundations). Altogether delegates from at least 8 countries (Germany, Poland, UK, Ireland, France, Turkey, Bulgaria and Ukraine) attended the international multiplier event in Szczecin, leveraging the dissemination of the Employment Alliance results to an even higher international level.

On December 5th the UK/Ireland Cross Border Regional Employment Alliance launched the Innovation Invitation programme in the auspicious surroundings of the Government Buildings in Stormont, Belfast. A high profile audience consisting of Members of Parliament from both jurisdictions, elected representatives from the Northern Ireland Assembly and Local Councillors and high ranking civil servants in the field of employment were joined by academics from the third level education sector, business support agencies, VET experts, and other interested stakeholders.

A comprehensive presentation was given by the project Manager, Sarah Mallon on the background to the Project's inception and development as it has moved towards maturity. with tangible products and benefits which have been driven by input from the work of the Cross Border Alliance meetings which were held in Dundalk, Ireland and Newry, UK.

Dr Conor Patterson from Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency led the audience through the Action Plan highlights from the Alliance focusing on no to low cost collaborative interventions which in aggregate can have a substantial impact. Actions highlighted included new training

initiatives which the Local Enterprise Office in County Louth introduced during the lifetime of the project to try and address the demands and skills mismatch between employers and graduates, and also to introduce the concept of entrepreneurship as a career option. In Newry and Mourne they have led the way in developing the concept of 'Champions'- a transformative initiative to make a positive contribution to the prospects of young people as well as the development of the local area. This involves engaging successful members of the community who have influence and know the 'who' and the 'how'. Linked by the connection to their community and not bounded by geographical constraints, this repository of talent can pave a path towards gatekeepers in organisations which would not normally be accessible to humanities and creative graduates, especially those from less affluent backgrounds. There are no onerous time commitments for the Champions however small actions by them can have significant impacts for graduates seeking direction.

The Innovation Invitation Course was unveiled to the audience and all the modules were discussed and sample units demonstrated. The content of the course and the overwhelming acknowledgement of the need for interventions of this nature from a very diverse audience led to a lively discussion from educationalists, legislators and employment and business support agencies.

Bringing the REAL Project to the national stage in Ireland

The Irish Government launched the first Action Plan for Education, led by Minister Richard Bruton, aimed at making the Irish education and training service the best in Europe by 2026. The plan builds on the successful model of the Action Plan for Jobs which incorporates the Department of Education's Strategy Statement as well as the Action Plan for Education. On 19th December 2016 in Dundalk Institute of Technology a large gathering of academics, educators and students chaired by Thomas McEvoy from Louth County Council met to roll out the plan. Thomas and his REAL partner Joe English from Meath County Council outlined the objectives and achievements of the REAL project. The project was well received by the Minister, who recommended that the project be further discussed with his officials. A conversation with officials subsequently took place, with project details being forwarded to the Principal Officer with responsibility for Higher Education Policy and Skills.

Benefits beyond the Project Lifetime

Innovation Invitation Course

The final version of the Innovation Invitation Course is now available online in English, German and Polish on the project website. The seven module programme can be used by educators in its entirety or they can use individual sections and the course comes complete with tutor notes. For those wishing to take the course as individuals there is a mobile and tablet version.

Employment Alliance Toolkit

The two Alliances established in Ireland / UK and Germany/Poland will continue to operate beyond the lifetime of the project and through their experience they have engaged with stakeholders in other areas or who are willing to explore this innovative concept. If you are interested in exploring the option of establishing an Employment Alliance in your area, we have systemised the process and lessons learned in the form of the Employment Alliance Toolkit which is available on the project website www.employmentalliance.eu and the Project Partners are available to respond to any queries you may have.



Our Goal

The Employment Alliance project aims to empower young unemployed or underemployed graduates to become entrepreneurs and high value employees in a short period after leaving university.



OVERCOMING BARRIERS



Our Approach

To do so, we will build synergistic relationships between key stakeholders in the field of higher education, small and medium enterprises (SME) and business support organisations to create a new culture of collaboration in employment support.

Two Initial Territorial Employment Alliances formed

Memoranda of Understanding signed in May 2015



Ireland/
United Kingdom



Germany/
Poland

Our Project Team

The Employment Alliance is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project led by Louth County Council and integrates 5 additional key partners from four countries. The consortium has been formed strategically to bring together all those competencies and experiences needed to exploit the full value of the Employment Alliances across Europe.

A dynamic team of practitioners:

We strongly believe in partnerships and collaboration

Making a true impact is our core goal with all activities being designed to reach this goal

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