

WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals – Svetla Toneva from Bulgaria

We are very happy to launch this section with **Svetla Toneva** from Bulgaria – the Director of VET Center, Workers' Education & Training College, with outstanding experience in adult education and professional orientation.



Please review below what he has shared with us:

"Although the work-based Learning often is considered as having lower value and quality, since 2015 it became at political focus of the European and National policies of Adult Training and VET. Such approaches as Apprenticeship, Traineeship, Dual VET, Mentoring and other instruments have been introduced and explored widely in order to meet the increasing skills gap between formal Education and Training system and Labour Market and Business needs. The work-based Learning equips learners with the "right skills for the right (work) place" providing learning in real work environment and practically-oriented knowledge and skills for job performance. Work based Learning have enormous effects for vulnerable people – especially inexperienced youngsters, NEETs, long-term unemployed people, drop-outs, and people with low or without qualification.

As every type of learning beyond school or formal training institution, the work-based Learning is influenced by many external factors, which could change the seeking aims – such as the company policies, motivation of learners or mentors, job organisation, planning of results, measurement of productivity, etc. To organise an effective work based learning process in non-education environment is also a big challenge in most cases. The quality of training at the work place is often taken as a challenge by Education and Training experts and stakeholders. The cost –benefit analysis, ensuring advantages of work based Learning for all participating parties is a challenge too... Last, but not least, the qualified on-the-job trainers/mentors/instructors is a task to be further developed.

Possible solutions to challenges related to work-based learning:

- motivation of all participants in the process should be ensured;
- appropriate organisation of the learning, incl. duration, planning of the aims and results to be achieved, documentation of learners' achievements and division of tasks are essential;
- ensuring that the design of work-based learning schemes balances the interests of both employer and trainee is key to successful implementation;
- providing of well-qualified both in their profession and in Adult Training trainers/mentors/instructors.

A person could be perfect specialist in its professional area, but he/she could not easily teach someone. Thus, the most important competences are teaching competences, as well as knowledge of Adult Training methodology (incl. learning by doing methods). Soft skills and Competences are important, such as Communication skills, planning, analytical, conflict solving and intercultural skills and competences. Skills for setting tasks and documentation and reporting of the learners' achievements are also needed."

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