

WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals – Lachezar Afrikanov, Sofia, Bulgaria

Today we are happy to present to you **Lachezar Afrikanov** from Sofia, Bulgaria. Lachezar has more than 10 years of experience as trainer, international project manager and consultant for the education sector. He is also external evaluator of projects in the field of VET. His fields of interest are: coaching for high performance, social entrepreneurship, systems thinking, work-based learning and art for education.



Please review below what he has shared with us:

“Work-based learning gives chance to young people and learners in general to be in touch with economic and work reality. They learn through real job situations, which nurture their motivation to learn more and to be better prepared which is a prerequisite for their success as professionals. For the BUSINESS and society as a whole, the system of work-based learning is a laboratory for individuals that are better prepared to enter real professional life, feel more confident with their personal and professional development, are more eager to face uncertainty and dynamism of modern world.

The main challenge is the lack of real trust between stakeholders, engaged the topic of work-based learning. It takes a lot of time for VET teachers to step into the shoes of BUSINESS representatives and vice versa. It takes even more for policy makers to open up for the feedback coming from the grassroots level and start designing policy measure in a bottom-up perspective.

The main solution to rebuilding and maintaining trust among stakeholders is to provide ongoing opportunities for exchange of information and collaboration, which will enable different participants in the process see the different perspectives. It can be in the form of monthly meetings or annual forums, but it needs to be regular in order to keep the constructive dialogue alive.

I see the WBL professional as "a world bridger" and "a synthesiser of diverse perspectives". This professional is creating the right atmosphere for quality collaboration between key stakeholders in the process of developing quality work-based learning. In this role, the WBL expert needs to be a good communicator and facilitator. Furthermore, a system oriented mindset is needed to be able to process all information coming from different parties - VET providers, BUSINESS, policy makers, social partners, wider community and find those meeting points, when common agreement on content and delivery can be met.

I am currently involved as a national expert in introducing the SWISS dual track education model in Bulgaria. My role is to facilitate the process of collaboration between VET teachers and BUSINESS representatives in agreeing on competences needed for the future professionals in a given economic field and on the basis of these frameworks build dual track education programmes for the VET system."

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