

DAAD WORKSHOP 3  
REPORT

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The EU Conference: University-enterprise cooperation: Building on new challenges from the past experience was jointly launched by the German Academic Exchange Service and Socrates. The main trust of this conference was to enhance university-enterprise cooperation in the area of education and training in a European context. The workshop had a mandate to examine the possibilities and challenges for the new life long learning programme and in particular Enterprise placements for students: sustainable partnership and strategies with companies. The workshop assessed, the strategies required to enhance cooperation between partners.

The following strategies were identified by the group and are presented by the Expert Group on future needs to enhance educational and enterprise cooperation. It provides a strategic vision and specific objectives for future cooperation requirements, and sets out a road map for how the vision and objectives can be achieved. The implementation of the strategy will help build a competitive mobile workforce providing advantages to enterprises in Europe and enhance the personal development of the individual. The strategy sets out clear long-term objectives for enterprise, education and training cooperation to develop a knowledge-based cultural and partnership that develops a highly skilled workforce within the EU. The Expert Group believes this vision is achievable.

However, the Expert Group recognise that one of the most important macroeconomic issues is the development of the individual and the quality/standard of the work placement/enterprise partnership. It was agreed that the key driver of cooperation by enterprise and educational institutes is the development of Europe standards in terms of enterprise contribution of:

- (a. Increase the duration of placement
  
- (b. The EU need to provide a dedicated funding that allows educational institutes invite small to medium enterprises targeted for mobility partnerships on study/information visits to enhance the development of the partnership and forge better understanding of between enterprise and educational bodies.
  
- (c. Develop contacts by using chamber of commerce at regional, national and EU levels

(d. The development of a website/database that provides information on partnerships RE: Enterprises/educational institutes willing to engage in placements and in particular SME organisations at different level.

The Expert group believe that such a strategy would enhance the development of the enterprise partnership, place value in the beneficiary and result in the long term Europe productivity growth through partnership.

But what drives partnership growth? First maintaining the current levels of partnership and increasing the growth of enterprise cooperation depends on many factors of which human capital is just one – beneficiaries with an identified level of skill, knowledge, competencies and attributes before they are awarded funding for mobility is one way forward, but an increasingly important one. The discussion of placement partnership received and should continue to receive considerable attention not least because of the ability of policy makers to influence enterprise cooperation through investments such as, Lifelong Learning Strategy in education and training. With acceptance that European, demographic, and cultural attitudes differ greatly between countries. The Expert Group found that, while accepting there are many good sustainable partnerships currently in operation, in general “enterprise” views Socrates, ERASMUS and Leonardo da Vinci projects that have, at it core, difficulty finding and placing students in work placements and maintaining a cooperation at SME level and in particular at liberal vocational enterprise entry. This was identified as a key barrier and major weakness with the current model of cooperation, and is putting a strain on building and sustaining the growth of cultural awareness and knowledge based individuals. It has been shown that mobility, leading to economic growth increasingly depends on the synergies between new knowledge and human capital, which is why large increases in funding for enterprise cooperation, education and training needs are provided. The increase in funding through the Lifelong Learning Strategy is viewed as the major concrete strength in building cooperation between enterprise and educational institutes. However, the mechanisms would be further enhanced by EU funded assistance toward the development of dedicated enterprise collaboration offices within educational institutions. The Expert Group believe this strategy would enhance cooperation in at least two ways: The structural creation of collaboration offices would increase

understanding between all partners, encourage greater mobility and enhancing the education and training programmes. In return for this further investment a spill-over effect would be achieved making other enterprises engage in the cooperation partnership. This would lead to a more productive, better-educated and culturally aware individuals that are as a result would make better use of enterprises' capital investments, encourage future investment. The cooperation would also boost the rate of innovation that can be achieved by having better educated workers generating new ideas. The Expert Group believe that a dedicated educational/enterprise website should be developed that has all partners identified. Such a facility would assist with the development of partnership and encourage further linkage between European enterprise and educational bodies. It would also help develop a National and Europe standardised platform of mobility conditions for beneficiaries all levels of the educational framework.

This publication reflects the views of the author. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and/or its partners as project coordinators.