LMRO Partnership Initiative
Enhancing Labour Market Relevance and Outcomes of Higher Education

Peer-Learning Activities
3rd International Policy and Practice Seminar on

Raising study success through student support and improved career-study linkages

Country Chair: Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

Seminar Brochure

24 February 2022 – virtual Zoom meeting

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About the LMRO Partnership Initiative

Technological advances, climate change, the digitalisation of the economy and exogenous shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic are transforming labour markets. Today's students and workers must adapt to changing tasks and jobs, acquiring skills that allow them to perform new jobs and updating their skills throughout their lives. The fast pace and uncertain nature of labour market changes also present challenges for higher education institutions (HEIs): they must anticipate new and emerging jobs and skill needs, create study programmes that are relevant to changing labour markets, and rethink how to communicate with learners on future careers and with employers on graduate skills. Governments, for their part, face the need to re-examine how their portfolio of policies – funding, monitoring and labour market data systems – can better support learners and institutions in responding to these challenges.

To support policy makers and HEIs in their shared commitment to enhance the labour market relevance and outcomes (LMRO) of higher education, the European Commission and the OECD launched the LMRO Partnership Initiative in 2019, a collaborative project with the participation of Austria, Hungary, Portugal, and Slovenia.

Through policy analysis, peer-learning activities and the development of a self-reflection tool for use by HEIs, the project contributed to building national government and higher education institutional capacity to implement future higher education policy reforms. The project informed and supported the European Strategy for Universities, linking its planned aims to national and institutional contexts and encouraging the transformation of the higher education sector.

Peer-learning activities

The five peer-learning events of the LMRO-PI were designed for policy makers and practitioners to review innovative national policies, identify enablers and barriers to innovative institutional practices, and discuss key findings from research. The aim was to (i) facilitate peer learning, (ii) identify key questions relevant for policymaking and the adoption and upscaling of effective institutional practices, and (iii) stimulate and contribute to an international policy debate. The online events gathered an international audience of higher education policy stakeholders, including policy makers, leaders of HEIs, teaching and administrative staff, higher education researchers, and representatives of quality assurance bodies, industry and student unions.

30 November 2020	17 February 2022	24 February 2022	3 March 2022	10 March 2022
Using labour market information to improve learners' choices and curriculum	Widening access and attracting students to fields with high labour market demand	Raising study success through student support and improved career-study linkages	Stimulating innovation through inter- and transdisciplinarity in education and research	Supporting improvement in teaching and learning to address students' needs and labour market demands
	Country chair: Austria	Country chair: Slovenia	Country chair: Hungary	Country chair: Portugal

Download the seminar brochures at: https://www.oecd.org/education/higher-education-policy/.

For more information on the LMRO Partnership Initiative, please contact: HigherEducation@oecd.org.

Seminar summary

Career-study linkages

The session explored the following questions:

- What are success factors for career guidance and mentoring?
- How do higher education institutions (HEIs) support students to find quality work opportunities to gain experience while studying?
- What information do students need to choose specialisations and higher-level studies?

Career guidance under the spotlight

Interview: **Maja Dizdarevic**, University of Ljubljana (Head of the Career Centre) interviewed **Tristram Hooley**, Inland Norway University of Applied Science on the future of work and a socially just approach to career guidance

Key points emerging from the interview:

- Career centres in HEIs should evolve to assume the role of facilitator, building communication between different partners and addressing questions of equal opportunities and meaningful careers. Career guidance is not only about helping students to find a job, but also how to give them the opportunity for their careers to be meaningful and successful.
- Career guidance should ensure that students are helped to understand how the soft and hard skills they are developing relate to employer demand, whether through access to career guidance centres or through their academic studies
- Career guidance should help students to develop the career management skills that will allow them to understand and respond to the opportunities and risks presented by dynamic labour markets
- Career guidance should even out the resources that people have access to and should demystify relationships and rules for those who do not have access to this information. Career guidance is also about work, learning and work-life balance, i.e. the different roles an individual plays in society. All three are important elements of career guidance.

Read more about Tristam Hooley's research at [Adventures in Career Development](#).

Characteristics of successful career guidance and support

Interview: **Duša Marjetič**, Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (Head of Higher Education Division) and National Co-ordinator of the LMRO Partnership Initiative interviewed:

- **Susanne Leeb**, Career Centre at the Technical University of Vienna: What are the characteristics of successful career guidance and support?
- **Alexis Redding**, Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education (Faculty Co-Chair of Higher Education): Three types of mentoring: Mirrors (identifying own preferences and matching career options), windows (showing what's possible) and guiding lights (first-hand insights on how to prepare and succeed in chosen path)
- **Viktória Lilla Pató**, Association of Hungarian Ph.D. and DLA Candidates (Vice-president for Foreign Affairs): What information do doctoral students need?

Discovery journey for students

The main aim of career guidance is to support students to get ideas and experience, assess and reorient if needed, organised as a discovery journey for students and not as a linear process. To be effective, career guidance must be adapted to the relevant phase of study, including higher level studies.

Career Centre as a neutral partner

The starting point for the Career Centre is always the student themselves and not what the employer expects them to be. Students are not pushed into fitting a certain pattern. The university expects the career centre to make sure that employers are not poaching students.

Career guidance services need to become and remain visible in the HEI

Students receive a lot of information on a daily basis. Constant marketing work and being present on campus is necessary. It helps if the activities offered have ECTS credits attached, and when there is referral by professors and teaching staff. It is important to have a framework that ensures quality for staff, students, the university and employers.

Transversal skills development

Study programmes that allow for a certain number of electives which students can freely choose allow students to widen their experience. However, students may feel overwhelmed by the course offer and lack clarity on learning outcomes and the labour market relevance of the skills developed in the course.

Examples

- **Signalling the value of transversal skills to students and employers:**
  - *KLUG*: A smart way of learning soft skills, **Nina Nentwig**, University of Graz (Project Co-ordinator)
  - *E-competence portfolio*, **Blanka Palcic**, University of Primorska (Head of the Career Centre)
  - *Curricular Unit Lifelong Employability* at the University of Porto, **Marta Santos** (Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences)
  - *"DiBaZes" Digital Badges*, **Hans Höller**, Johannes Kepler University Linz (Director of the Institute for Digital Business)

KLUG offers a range of courses in transversal skills related to eight areas: creativity & innovation, communication and media, diversity and tolerance, digital information, political engagement, self-

employment, leadership, and international networking. The courses are open to students at the University of Graz across all levels of study. High in the demand is the **extension curricula "Leadership"**.

The *E-competence portfolio* and the *Curricular Unit Lifelong Employability* are initiatives are intended to bridge between the end of the students' academic studies and the beginning of their work lives, and to train their soft skills in the area of leadership, and work closely with local businesses and civil society organisations. Diploma supplements and badges allow students to signal skills to future employers. The two initiatives are examples of how a "blueprint" that describes the knowledge and skills developed and the associated labour market prospects can help to guide student choice.

At the Johannes Kepler University Linz, *digital badges* are awarded to excellent students to stimulate the development of not domain related skills in line with the trend towards micro-learning and nano-degrees. Demand among students has been increasing and the attention is now on creating recognition among employers for these badges.

> Read brief descriptions of the initiatives: KLUG: A smart way of learning soft skills (Austria);   Extension curricula "Leadership - responsible action in society and economy" (Austria);   E-competence portfolio at the University of Primorska (Slovenia); Curricular Unit Lifelong Employability, University of Porto (Portugal);   "DiBaZes" Digital Badges as additional qualification for excellency (Austria).

Effective mentoring makes career search a less overwhelming experience

Career search processes can be overwhelming experiences for students, particularly when there are too many people sharing their opinions. In her research, **Alexis Redding** identified three types of relationships that can support students in navigating the career search process (Redding, 2021[1]):

- **Mirror mentor**: someone who has known the student for a long time and can give them encouragement. The student has already done the thinking about which field is going to be a good fit. So, this new mentor helps them to answer important questions about translating their personal goals into a professional context.

- **Window mentor**: can take many forms and could be a friend or significant other, a family member or an educator, or sometimes someone well informed in the field. A faculty member can also act as a window mentor, even if they have not necessarily known the student for a long period of time, as long as they have a good insight into the field and they are listening to what the student says about their needs and goals. A window mentor can make a big difference at this pivotal point.

- **Guiding lights**: once the student has had a chance to undertake personal reflection and field exploration and starts to think about committing to a specific career or a specific role, they need a guiding light. A guiding light is an experienced person who can help the student understand the realities of the work and their fit in the profession so that they can make concrete decisions about next steps. A guiding light mentor is someone who knows the field very well and can help the student ask and answer the question: How do I navigate this path successfully?

Example: Learning how to deal with biases in hiring

DEBIAS tool, **Lukas Witzany**, TU Vienna (Centre for Informatics and Society) interviewed by Tímea Schwimmer-Tóth, University of Szeged (Alumni Relations Manager, Szeged Alma Mater)

Rapporteur: **Anamarija Meglic**, Gea College Career Centre (Director of the International Office and Career Centre)

The Centre for Informatics and Society at the Vienna University of Technology (a research initiative of the University's Multidisciplinary Design and User Research Group) and the University's Career Centre carried

out a research project on how to use anonymisation technologies to counteract the unconscious bias (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity) in job interviews. The result is the **DEBIAS tool**, a digital platform that enables applicants and interviewers to conduct interviews in a two-step, partially anonymised process.

The process starts with specially designed workshops for applicants and company representatives to introduce the tool and provide background information on unconscious bias and the importance of diversity. The tool itself divides the interview process into (i) an anonymous <u>chat</u> (30-minute written, anonymous chat without sound or picture), which is structured by questions defined by the companies in advance, and (ii) a personal, unstructured <u>interview</u>, which is only conducted after the chat and its evaluation.

The DEBIAS tool specifies that the questions should be the same for everyone and in the same order. This allows for a better and comparative assessment of the applicants. The questions are also relatively weighted. Before moving to the next phase all answers in the anonymous chat are evaluated. The personal face-to-face interview is compared to the results. The tool contains a series of analysis and visualisation tools. Evaluation results show that the contrast between the anonymous chat and the personal interview allows the interviewer to detect and reflect on his/her own bias. Applicants generally perform as well or as poorly in the chat as in the interview, and personal preferences for one medium or the other are well balanced out by the sequence. Furthermore, the chat had a calming, decelerating effect on the applicants as, different to the standard face-to-face interview, answering in the chat environment takes longer.

> **Read** a brief description of Debias, and its use. Contact: debias@cisvienna.com.

What information do doctoral students need?

Information on employment opportunities and career prospects outside academia and public research organisations

A challenge that students in many doctoral degree programmes face is the general assumption that most doctoral students will seek academic employment. There is therefore no/limited attention to the provision of information on employment opportunities and career prospects outside academia and public research organisations. This view does not take into account that career preferences of individuals can change over time and that a range of psychological, sociological and economic factors influence doctoral students in their choice of employment sector. Insights into working conditions, funding acquisition and management can encourage or discourage students from pursuing certain careers.

The Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Students (DOSZ) has mechanisms for communicating with doctoral students and PhD candidates that reach around 3 500 individuals through an online platform with a trusted system that assures readers that the information is genuinely from DOSZ. An essential question is how a student advocacy organisation can scale up their provision of information. At DOSZ this is done via seminars. Help is needed not only from supervisors, but also on a broader level to address the issue of "uncertainty" among young researchers.

Examples

In academia, journal articles and other research achievements signal key doctoral degree skills, implicitly also underlying transferable skills. These skills signalling mechanisms also have an effect on businesses that traditionally hire doctoral degree holders, e.g. international companies and academic spin-offs. The

question is how to signal the value of doctoral skills to innovative companies and nascent innovator firms whose management does not have experience in doctoral education.[1]

- *Researcher Development Framework (RDF)*, **Kate Jones**, Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) UK (Head of Learning and Professional Development)
- *Programme "Naturtalente"*, **Bernhard Wundsam**, University of Vienna (Uniport - Careers Service)
- *Young Scientists mentoring programme* for PhD students and postdocs, University of Klagenfurt, **Rebecca Unterberger** (Research Service)

The **RDF**, developed in 2009 by Vitae, part of the Career Research and Advisory Centre in the UK, describes the knowledge, intellectual abilities, techniques and professional standards needed to do research, as well as the personal qualities, knowledge and skills required to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research. The RDF maps researcher competencies (characteristics, skills, knowledge, behaviours and attributes) across four domains, providing a holistic view of how to develop effective researchers: (i) knowledge and intellectual abilities; (ii) personal effectiveness; (iii) research governance and organisation; and (iv) engagement, influence and impact. It is the framework for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. On an individual level, researchers can map their competencies to the RDF in a way that draws out their current strengths as well as their areas for development.

NaturTalente is a high potential programme at the University of Vienna, designed for approximately 30 master's and PhD STEM students majoring in life sciences/medical studies or alternatively in computer studies. Students who thrive for a career beyond science are nominated by their faculties and will get to know 6-7 companies on site. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in a soft-skill training focusing on personal career development goals, teamwork and leadership. Benefits for students include first-hand insights into companies/careers outside the academic path, , certificate for job applications, networking with like-minded students. Benefits for companies are employer branding and recruitment, and for the university the programme has contributed to an increase in reputation and networking with companies.

The **Young Scientists Mentoring** programme is aimed at PhD students and postdocs in the late stages of their research that are looking for multidisciplinary support. In particular, it is meant to prepare them for an international labour market for young researchers. Participants can nominate an external mentor from another university or from outside academia.

Read brief descriptions of the initiatives: Vitae Researcher Development Framework (UK);   Programme "NaturTalente" University of Vienna (Austria);   Young Scientists Mentoring for PhD students and post-docs (Austria).

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[1] See (OECD, forthcoming[2]) for an analysis of institutional practice in Hungary and policy options to enhance the cultivation of transferable skills as part of doctoral degree programmes.

Designing inclusive student support

The following questions were explored in the session:

- How to monitor progress and factors for student success?
- When and how to advise students during their studies to increase their study success?

Monitoring progress and factors for student success

Moderated panel discussion:

- **Karl Ledermüller** (Head of the Evaluation and Quality Enhancement) and **Julia Spörk** (Student Panel Monitoring), Vienna University of Economics and Business on experiences with student monitoring
- **Nuno Neto Rodrigues**, Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics on the national approach in Portugal to monitor progress and factors for student success
- **Ruben Alves**, University of Aveiro (Aveiro Education and Social Alliance Project Manager) on the University's Student Academic Pathways Observatory

Moderated by **Duša Marjetič**, Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (Head of Higher Education Division and National Co-ordinator of the LMRO Partnership Initiative)

Data-supported mechanisms can help HEIs and programme co-ordinators to detect students that have difficulty progressing with their studies, with the aim of offering them tailored support to catch up or change programme. Central-level units play an important role in piloting, evaluating and mainstreaming innovative approaches in inclusive student support.[2]

"**Student Monitoring**" is a collaborative initiative which involves nine public universities in Austria. The main focus is on monitoring study progression (completion, dropout and transfer), examination activity, and the effects of labour market integration and socio-demographic factors on study behaviour, performance and progress. The initiative is designed as a pilot, with upscaling potential to establish a comparative analysis of study and labour market-related behaviour of students at the participating universities to strengthen inter-university co-operation. At the Vienna University of Economics and Business all questionnaires are administered online, which increases response rates. Reports are automatically generated; they are discussed in the bi-annual programme directors' meetings and used for benchmarking of programmes.

"**Infocursos**" in Portugal is a longitudinal national-level data collection that follows the students from secondary education to PhD. The aim is to analyse factors that impede and enhance study success at several points of the student journey: transition between secondary education and higher education, transition between different levels of study and entry into the labour market.

The **Student Academic Pathways Observatory at the University of Aveiro** has evolved over the years and now includes all academic years. From the initial focus on mental health, seven risk indicators were developed, covering the student's financial situation, academic performance and wellbeing. The aim is to also include indicators related to study habits.

> **Read** brief descriptions of the initiatives: Student and graduate panel monitoring at the WU Vienna (Austria), Infocursos Portal (Portugal), Student Journey Observatory at the University of Aveiro (Portugal).

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[2] For an analysis of institutional practices see (OECD, forthcoming[3]) for Portugal, (OECD, forthcoming[4]) for Slovenia, and (OECD, forthcoming[5]) for Austria.

Examples of effective timing and organising of student support services

Panel discussion moderated by **Helga Posset**, Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (National Co-ordinator LMRO Partnership Initiative)

- **Rita Takacs**, Eötvös Loránd University, ELTE (Head of the Student Support Centre of the Department of Informatics) on interventions to reduce dropouts from ICT programmes
- **Roberto Chiodelli**, University of Algarve (Programme Co-ordinator) on the University's mindfulness programme
- **Jacqueline McCormack**, Institute of Technology of Sligo (Vice-President, Online Development) on the student support journey in online learning

Students are not always aware of the support services available to them. In particular, students that work besides their studies and/or have caregiving responsibilities may spend less time on campus and therefore not be fully informed.

When **interventions to reduce dropouts from ICT programmes** started at ELTE University, around 64% of students were dropping out of the programmes. Introducing an obligatory course with a training of 30 hours, mentor classes and an obligatory advisory service with 15-18 students per group decreased the drop-out rate by 28%.

In Portugal, international students, particularly from Portuguese-speaking African countries and Brazil, may face particular difficulties in adapting to life and studies in Portugal, with many having limited financial resources. The University of Algarve has one of the largest shares of international students (23%). The **Mindfulness Programme** seeks to support the emotional wellbeing of students through six weekly sessions lasting two hours each. At the end of each session participants receive, through e-mail or WhatsApp, a summary of what has been covered on and an audio file for the indicated guided meditation practice. Between the sessions, participants receive a message of encouragement to do the weekly tasks assigned to practice mindfulness.

Student support services at the Institute of Technology of Sligo (soon to be part of the Atlantic Technology University Ireland) were designed to meet the needs of online learners (around 11 000) for which coming to campus would be difficult as they have caring responsibilities, a learning disability, physical disability, or face geographical barriers. Student support services are presented visually on a clickable map which connects students with support services and online student mentors.

Read brief descriptions of the initiatives: Interventions to reduce dropouts from ICT programmes at ELTE (Hungary); Mindfulness programme at the University of Algarve (Portugal); Student support journey designed to meet the needs of online learners (Ireland).

Examples of workplace exposure in teacher training

- *Pedagogical practice and practical training* at the Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska, **Nina Krmac** (Co-ordinator)
- *OEHA! tool*: Global goals and sustainable use of smart phones: Learning about sustainability and emerging professions, **Petra Szucsich** and **Martin Sankofi**, University College of Teacher Education Vienna

Pedagogical practice and practical training at the Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska focuses on how to prepare prospective teachers for their future work. Students experience factors influencing effective learning in the planning and implementing of classes and try out various strategies in a guided setting and with extensive reflection.

Addressing the need for digital education at an early stage, a project designed and implemented by educational scientists and prospective teachers has launched the **OEHA!** tool to explain to pupils aged 7-14 years the production and lifecycle of a smart phone and the implications for the environment and globalisation of work, including job profiles and educational requirements. The project has developed teaching material for primary and secondary school teachers on (digital) sustainability.

> **Read** brief descriptions of the initiatives: Practical training in education studies (Slovenia);   OEHA! Digital sustainability and career opportunities of smart phones (Austria)

Supporting students to complete their studies

The following questions were explored in the session:

- How can flexibility of curricula and programme delivery, modularisation of final thesis, and academic writing support students in the final stage of their studies?

- How to support working students and those who have previously suspended their studies to complete their studies?

Flexibility, modularisation of final thesis and academic writing support

Panel discussion moderated by **Arthur Mettinger**, Vice-Rector for Education FH Campus Wien*:*

- **Sonja Rutar,** University of Primorska (President of the Slovenian National Council for Quality and Evaluation of Education and Vice-Dean for the Quality and Development at the University of Primorska, Faculty of Education)
  - o "Open-door policy" for returning "job-outs"
  - o Substitution of bachelor's thesis
- **Doris Hattenberger**, University of Klagenfurt (Vice-Rector for Education)
  - o Modularisation of final dissertation
  - o "*Schreibwanderung*" – academic writing support

A bachelor's or master's dissertation is often a stumbling block for students, particularly for those students needing to combine study and work. The following approaches to support students were discussed:

- Support with academic writing helps students during critical phases and throughout their studies. Different formats of support exist. Particularly effective is taking students out of their day-to-day student life, allowing them to dedicate time and full attention to the writing process, accompanied by elements of peer-review and expert feedback.

- Dividing the dissertation into different stages, rewarding successful completion with ECTS credits, and segmenting the examination process places less weight on the final exam and provides students with frequent touchpoints with their supervisor.

- Programme co-ordinators need to recognise that motivation and personal reasons are important factors for completion, particularly in the case of suspended studies. Tutoring and mentoring can help to increase study motivation. Allowing students to continue their suspended studies without additional fees shows promising results.

Examples of support services for students who combine studies and work

There is a risk that students who need or want to combine study and work start to spend too much time on their job and that work begins to take priority. Particularly, in high-demand fields with global job

opportunities and virtual working arrangements, such as ICT, high salary prospects outweigh the potential wage premium for a completed degree, at least in the short term.

- *Studenski service*, **Marko Rupercic**, Slovenian Student Union (Student Work Advisor and Project Co-ordinator of register of student work)
- *Study and Work programme*, **Florian Mayer**, Johannes Kepler University Linz (Director Kepler Alumni Society)
- *HUNexpert*, **Fanny Liska** (**HUNexpert** contributor)
- *Scholarship Fund* of the University of Primorska, **Aleš Oven**, University of Primorska (Senior Advisor to the Rector)
- *Klagenfurt Scholarship*, **Anna Landes**, University of Klagenfurt (Head of Public Relations)

Studenski service organises student work that allows students in Slovenian higher education to gain work experience while studying. About two-thirds of students engage in student work every year, for between two and three months per year on average. Student has tax benefits; foreign students can also enter this type of employment during their studies.

Young Expert System - HUNexpert was established for young researchers and students wanting to get work experience. It is a database connecting researchers, PhD candidates and experts in various fields to support companies with specialised knowledge in their given field. The PhD candidates get a salary and they work on short-term projects.

The recently launched **Study and Work programme** at the Johannes Kepler University Linz seeks to support students to complete their studies through a part-time study arrangement and provides support for students to find a part-time job in a related field. Participating companies need to accept guidelines which limit them to a maximum amount of working hours per week, adaptable per semester.

The **Klagenfurt Scholarship** promotes outstanding master's students whose career paths indicate top performance in their studies and careers. Companies get to know talented students and junior staff, establish contacts with the university and strengthen their image. They have the opportunity to award their scholarship for a specific field of study and are networked with suitable students. The scholarship holders are not only supported financially, they also get the opportunity to complete internships with their sponsor, write their master's thesis, work on projects and thus get to know their future potential employer. The Klagenfurt scholarship was launched in 2018 by the University of Klagenfurt together with political representatives of the city of Klagenfurt.

The **Scholarship Fund of the University of Primorska** is a partnership between the University of Primorska, local municipalities and businesses. The aims are to establish contacts between students and employers and to encourage the best students to achieve the best possible results in their studies and to reward them with an opportunity to gain practical experience related to their field of study. The fund has been operating for 14 years and more than 500 scholarships have been granted.

Read more about the initiative: Student work (Slovenia);   and find more information online about the Scholarship Fund of the University of Primorska.

Brief description of the initiatives

The brief descriptions of the initiatives have been provided and drafted by the relevant organisations themselves and have not been edited or amended by the OECD. Any questions relating to the initiatives should be addressed to the contact provided.

KLUG: A smart way of learning soft skills (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Austria
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	KLUG: A smart way of learning soft skills
Website (if available)	KLUG - Kompetenzen lernen Uni Graz (uni-graz.at)
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Center of Entrepreneurship and Applied Business Studies
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2018
Contact	klugraz@uni-graz.at

Short summary of the initiative

It is a platform which includes different programs. It is broadly diversified with eight different topics where lectures, events, workshops, a mentoring program, and a supplementary program "leadership – acting responsibly in Society and Business" are offered. The eight topics are: creativity & innovation, communication and media, diversity and tolerance, digital information, political engagement, self-employed, leadership and team, international networking. The offers are open to all study programs (it doesn't matter if you are in bachelor, master, diploma, or PhD) and the events, workshops and the mentoring program are also open for non-students. All the offers are linked to practice (for example lecturers are from outside of university and experts from field). Upon completion of a set of courses students can acquire a certificate.

Why was the initiative launched?

It was built as a platform to connect economy, society, and university and to build a space where work relevant skills are trained and an exchange of experts from all directions is possible. The platform should help students heighten up their employability by promoting their soft skills like for example communication, conflict management or intercultural competences and learn them to bring their knowledge into business. The platform also helps students networking by connecting them in events and workshops with all kinds of organizations.

What are key achievements?

The possibility for students to acquire a certificate, motivated students who want to promote their skill portfolio, over 200-300 students each semester in more than 25 courses, 3-4 small and big events every semester to actual topics and with practitioners from different areas, increase students' employability.

What do you think were the key success factors?

The existing know-how from other cross faculty projects we developed, our big network and our collaboration with companies to fill the offers with much practice as we can.

What do you think were the barriers?

To convey to students that there is not only a need for technical know-how in jobs after university but also a need for people who are able to bring that know-how to companies.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Start with a smaller program first and make it bigger step by step. To start with all eight topics with full of offer from the beginning was to much. Start small and look would students prefer and specially what are their needs.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

To stay agile with the program because there are different needs in different areas which change from time to time. A good way also would be to create more space in curricula to include topics such as soft skills. But that is not our area of responsibility.

Extension curricula "Leadership - responsible action in society and economy" (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Austria
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Erweiterungsstudium – Extension curricula "Leadership – Acting responsibly in Society and Business")
Website (if available)	https://klug.uni-graz.at/de/erweiterungsstudium/
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Center of Entrepreneurship and Applied Business Studies
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2018
Contact	leadership@uni-graz.at

Short summary of the initiative

Acting responsibly in society and business: a one-year evening and weekend program with 45 ECTS to teach students from all study programs the basics of leadership. The aim is to provide students with real-life leadership competencies needed in the job market. Rather than transferring cold knowledge, the emphasis lies on creating hands-on personal competencies in settings where people can thrive. This is a shift away from the classic lecture style of universities, and towards coaching and workshops.

Why was the initiative launched?

To build a bridge between university and economy and between end of study to start of work life. Students from the university have good technical skills and they are trained in theory well but there is often a lack of how to bring the knowledge into business. The idea was to heighten up students' employability by training soft skills in the are of leadership

What are key achievements?

The high interest of the students in our programme (more than 30 students every year), the practical relevance (working together every year with non-profit companies on real projects), and the interactive approach in the courses (always learning by doing). The networking with companies and the higher chance of getting a job after graduating at university.

What do you think were the key success factors?

Leadership training provides students with skills which are not found in most degree programs, giving them an edge/advantage over other candidates. Other key success factors are our hands-on, learning by doing approach to skill attainment, and a supportive environment and group dynamic.

What do you think were the barriers?

The biggest challenge is to simulate a real work environment and to let the students know what employers expect from them.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

 Allow all courses of study programs from the beginning. We started with only a few selected programmes in the pilot program (law, sociology, and science). A brighter field of interdisciplinary in the group and the courses give a better impact on results, group dynamic and motivation in courses.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

We will focus even more on cooperation with companies to bring the experience of outside professionals into the university.

E-competence portfolio at the University of Primorska (Slovenia)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Slovenia
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	E-competence portfolio/ E-kompetenčni portfolijo
Website (if available)	www.kariernicenter.upr.si
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	University of Primorska
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2015
Contact	blanka.palcic@upr.si

Short summary of the initiative

In 2012 the University of Primorska (hereafter UP) established a Network System of Lifelong Learning, whose aim is to promote the Lifelong Learning Culture and develop new knowledge and competencies. For this purpose, in the same year, the university published the Lifelong Learning Catalogue, which has been maintained until today. Its intention is promoting the Lifelong Learning offer at the university and to others. The goal of the Network is:

- to develop a quality offer of our programs
- to encourage cooperation of the members of the university (6 faculties, research institute, library) with other educational institutions and the economy
- to transfer good practices and

- to allow the acquisition of additional knowledge and competencies to our students and graduates In those years, both Slovenia and the EU supported the establishment of career centres at universities.

With the support from the European Social Fund and Ministry of Education, the UP has been able to start the implementation of the career activities coordinated by the university. In 2016, the Career Center of the University of Primorska, Center for Lifelong Learning and Career Orientation (hereafter KC UP) in the form of a university support center for all UP members was established.The most important role of KC UP has is to empower its students on their career paths.

Let me point out the Program for Leading Personal Career, that includes: career consulting (individual focus counselling)-networking with potential employers and many opportunities for gaining additional knowledge and competencies though LLL Throughout the entire year, students can collect knowledge and competencies in the "CAREER BASKET", which are going to make the transition to the labour market easier (students can choose a waste range of workshops and trainings and then transfer them to the Competence portfolio). In order to complete the offer within the LLP Network System at the University of Primorska, and to empower students and graduates on their career path, KC UP developed the e-Competence portfolio. The competence portfolio is located on the KC UP's web portal, which represents the collection of individual competencies obtained through formal and non-formal learning and an individual's work experience during studies.

The e-competence portfolio is a step, which everyone usually takes after: have completed the Personal and Professional Development Questionnaire, obtained feedback information and have an in-depth conversation with the career counsellor,-some students also prepare a "Harmonigram", which represents individuals' life context and expectations.The next step is e-Competence portfolio and Career Plan, which consists of the assessment of personal potential and a planning of career goals. The e-Competence portfolio is multi-layered:- it demonstrates someone's abilities and forms a personal record which represents their knowledge, set of skills, personality traits, values, current capability etc., - systematically provides order in the review of personal achievements and- automatically raises the student's confidence, self-confidence and motivates them for further development of their career,- encourages students to independently plan the addition of knowledge and skills. KC UP developed the e-Competence portfolio, which can be used by students and other interested in building their own career. When applying and also attending the events within the e-Catalogue for Lifelong Learning, participation data is automatically transferred to their portfolio, which is helpful with the recording and reviewing of acquired competencies. Besides that, the KC UP encourages students, to enrol in different projects, which are offered in collaboration with research institutions and employers'. Students themselves can include references and thus upgrade their e-Competence Portfolio, with writing down the experiences of cooperation with the social environment. The next step for KC UP is to involve in the initiative our partners from the labour market, so they can confirm student's experiences.

The idea or the challenge of KC UP is that one day the printout of the UP e-Competence portfolio will be considered as part of the diploma supplement for UP graduates, thus contributing to greater transparency of acquired knowledge and personal goals throughout the studies, and also for better employability opportunities.

Why was the initiative launched?

To empower students and graduates on their career paths and to improve employment opportunities through more effective career planning also to further increase the employability of graduates.

What are key achievements?

The key achievements to be mentions are:

- Developed e-tools for managing personal career paths,
- Systematic reviews of individual achievements,
- Motivated students that independently plan further acquisition of knowledge and skills
- Increased number of students, graduates and others involved into active using of e-tools.

What do you think were the key success factors?

 The success factors are several, but we could point out:

- The right moment as it was introduced at the time of the pandemic, when we switched to online work and students had time to think about their own careers

- Constant efforts of employees to bring e-tools closer to users and most importantly closer to the young people (possibility of using also on phones for example).

What do you think were the barriers?

The main barrier in system complexity (university as a network of different members) and different ways of working with students and graduates on the member of university. There is also still a lack of awareness of the necessity of career planning even before graduation.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

We would probably change the initial steps of implementation, in particular by involving students, graduates and other users even more in the whole process of e-tools development, thus avoiding subsequent adaptation.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

Not directly, but through the project "UP Career Center" which was partly funded by the European Union under the European Social Fund and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, from 2015 to 2020.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

Yes, we are already continuing the development of the initiative.

Curricular Unit Lifelong Employability, University of Porto (Portugal)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Portugal
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Curricular Unit Lifelong Employability / Unidade Curricular Empregabilidade ao Longo da Vida
Website (if available)	https://sigarra.up.pt/fpceup/pt/UCURR_GERAL.FICHA_UC_VIEW?pv_ocorrencia_id=489282
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	University of Porto - Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2020 / not applicable
Contact	marta@fpce.up.pt
Short summary of the initiative	

The initiative consists in a Transversal Skills Unit on Lifelong Employability developed for Bachelor and Master students. It was designed as a b-learning Curricular Unit so that the subject can be worked on alongside other technical subjects, promoting the integral training of students, and to guarantee it can be available to a very significant number of students per semester (up to 500). The main objective is to develop students' skills to build and reconstruct their professional paths throughout life in an intentional, contextualised, and autonomous manner, by combining different moments and tools to promote students' reflection about their individual paths, alongside with specific training content about how they can present themselves to the labour market; and also by promoting structured opportunities for them to contact employers and different professionals (e.g., through visits to companies, a podcast with interviews with professionals, among others).

In depth, this Curricular Unit considers:

- a face-to-face moment/workshop and synchronous sessions with students, for content exploration and clarification of doubts (concerning the construction of their career path, considering their past experiences, their skills, constraints, the information they have on the labour market, the changes occurring in career development

and the way they can present themselves to employers – Curriculum Vitae, Motivation Letter, Digital Footprint, and Interview).

- a set of micro-learnings, consisting of short videos (5-10 minutes) with relevant content on the topics to be covered (stated above), which make it possible to ensure that the content is easily accessed by a significant number of students per semester.
- company visits to different professional contexts, which provide an insight into the real work context and inform students' future choices
- a Podcast Program, through production and availability to students of a Podcast programme (named Career Sharing Podcast) that aims to present the diversity of paths and experiences of Alumni
- Ongoing Initiatives, to enhance the visibility and formal recognition of the time dedicated by students to initiatives within the Academic Community related to employability and skills development (e.g., job fairs)

The case study on this initiative has been published in Stanford University's Life Design Community of Practice and can be accessed **here**.

Why was the initiative launched?

National regulations have imposed changes on study plans, leading to the restructuring of integrated master's degrees into bachelor's degrees and independent master's degrees in various areas of study. This change brought an opportunity to rethink the study plans, based on the current needs of the labour market, already reflected in the strategic guidelines of the University of Porto, which refer to the need to promote the full/integral training of students and the diversification of the training offer.

Moreover, the changes that are occurring at work and that lead to the adoption of career approaches that are built throughout life, imposes the need to prepare individuals to deal with such changes. In fact, if we know that professional transitions are going to be more and more frequent, isn't it relevant to ensure that everyone acquires strategies and tools to deal with and overcome such transition moments? Higher education students are a privileged public to work with on this issue because they are approaching a moment of transition that, despite being normative, benefits from attention and from the acquisition of strategies that expand their power to act.

Furthermore, a consultation was carried out with students and companies (through questionnaires and interviews) to understand their needs regarding the issue of working on employability in Higher Education and the need to promote contact between students and the business world, the results of which reinforced the relevance of developing the project.

What are key achievements?

One of the key achievements was the recognised relevance attributed by companies, students, and the University of Porto to the results of the consultation, which were shared with the Academic Community through a underlined webinar which reached 787 people (to date).

Also, the first two editions have already been implemented, having reached a total of 344 students, and in each of them an impact evaluation process has been carried out, which has shown positive impacts of the Curricular Unit in dimensions such as self-awareness, planning ability, ability to participate and sense of collective influence.

What do you think were the key success factors?

The fact that the development of the practice has been based on the consultation and active involvement of companies and students from the very first moment.

The b-learning format, allowing face-to-face and distance, synchronous and asynchronous moments, promoting the progression of subjects at the individual rhythm of the students, their autonomy and responsibility.

The development of the Curricular Unit under an applied research project (running since January 2020), promotes a continuous assessment process, which is conducted through the application of surveys to evaluate students' experience and an impact questionnaire (pre and post-test).

What do you think were the barriers?

One barrier was the lack of budget to meet all the development costs of the Curricular Unit (e.g., preparation and production of micro-learning; design and production of materials). We can also identify as a barrier the difficulty in making the Curricular Unit a priority in the students' agenda, in comparison with other subjects of more technical skills, even though they recognise the relevance of employability topics.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Given the proximity to the beginning of the implementation, we are not yet able to share major clues at this level. We can however share that we have planned to always end the academic year with a face-to-face initiative (called "Get Together") to bring together all the students involved, all the partner companies, and professionals who contributed to the Curricular Unit. In 2021 it did not happen due to COVID-19 restrictions. Given the importance that was attributed by the students to the creation of face-to-face contact moments, eventually, we would try to create the necessary conditions to do so, within the established limitations.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

This practice is aligned with the strategic objectives defined by the University of Porto to promote the full training of its students (including training in transversal skills), which is also in line with the national concerns of bringing HEIs closer to the work contexts and employability issues of their students.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

At the moment we are teaching the Curricular Unit in one of the University's Schools (Engineering Faculty), with students of this study area, but given the transversality of the subject and its importance for all the University's students, independently of their field of study, we aim to create the necessary conditions in the near future to expand it to all the students that, independently of their degree course, want to explore these topics in their study plans.

"DiBaZes" Digital Badges as additional qualification for excellency (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Austria
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	"DiBaZes" Digital Badges as additional qualification for excellent students (Digitale Badges als Zusatzqualifikation für excellente Studierende)
Website (if available)	-
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Johannes Kepler University Linz – Institute of Digital Business
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2020 - ongoing
Contact	Office@idb.jku.at
Short summary of the initiative	

Students at JKU often start their labour career before finishing their study. The documentation of their skills and knowledge is not very detailed and there is a great variety between students. As we are teaching the subject of digitalization, we want to provide (more detailed) certificates in a digital form - using the open badges standard.

The first target group are excellent students - doing more than needed for completing the curriculum, e.g. by helping other students or demonstrating superior knowledge over an extended period of time, not just at one point in time. We contacted individual employers to learn about their needs: There is little experience with digital badges, but high interest.

Why was the initiative launched?

The action offers outstanding students an option to be able to document their knowledge acquired at the institute in more detail than is possible with the usual certificates at a university. The measure transfers experiences from digital business, inb. With regard to business model innovations, to digital education and reflects the organizational structure of the institute, which is divided into a department for Digital Business and one for Digital Education. We have been using digital media in teaching for decades - starting with hypercard applications on the Macintosh plus.Thus, we cover almost all phases of teaching - except for the keystone - the (digital) passport of knowledge and skills for the students.

What are key achievements?

- Building a common understanding of graduate skills through collaboration with employers
- Creating trusted mechanisms for students to signal their skills
- Adapting curricula, the mix and flexibility of programmes, and qualifications to respond to evolving labour market demands
- Monitoring and ensuring the continued relevance of the educational offering

What do you think were the key success factors?

- Technical knowledge of implementation procedures
- Selection of the content for prototypes to introduce the concept
- Providing transparency and comparability of curricula
- Knowledge of skills needed by employers

What do you think were the barriers?

Digital Badges are largely unknown among Austrian employers

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Not yet sufficient experience to answer this question

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

No

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

Next steps depend on approval of the assessment criteria in the curriculum.

Vitae Researcher Development Framework (UK)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	UK
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)
Website (if available)	Researcher professional development (vitae.ac.uk) https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Vitae (part of the Career Research and Advisory Centre)
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	Vitae RDF published in 2009, ongoing
Contact	Dr Kate Jones, Head of Learning and Professional Development, Vitae (CRAC), UK Kate.jones@vitae.ac.uk

Short summary of the initiative

The RDF describes the knowledge, intellectual abilities, techniques and professional standards to do research, as well as the personal qualities, knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research. The RDF maps researcher competencies (characteristics, skills, knowledge, behaviours and attributes) across four domains, providing a holistic view of how to develop effective researchers. It is the framework for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. On an individual level, researchers can map their competencies to the RDF in a way that draws out their current strengths as well as their areas for development.

Along with the accompanying Researcher Development Statement (RDS; 2012), the RDF underpins policy and practice relating to the professional development of researchers at all levels, including: researchers throughout their research careers and/or preparing for careers beyond academic research; institutions and staff supporting researchers; employers of researchers within and beyond academia ; policy makers and funders of research.

Why was the initiative launched?

In the early 2000s there was a growing requirement to establish the career of 'researcher' as a valued profession.[1] The key challenges were lack of clarity about the characteristics of an effective researcher and what constitutes a research job or career, and an absence of recognition – even among researchers themselves – of research as a profession and researchers as professionals. The Joint Skills Statement,[2] published in 2001, described the range of skills and attributes expected of doctoral graduates, but only applied to doctoral researchers and had no explanation or examples of what success/competence looked like.

So there was a need for a comprehensive description of and consensus on what constituted an effective researcher. Responding to this need, and building on the JSS and responding to the challenges described above, Vitae created the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF; 2010) in close collaboration with the higher education sector and other wider stakeholders.

[1] See UK Roberts Review and the European Charter and Code. [2] See JointStatement (dmu.ac.uk)

What are key achievements?

The key achievement of the RDF is its widespread take up and use by universities, researchers and policy makers worldwide. The RDF is embedded across the sector in the UK and other countries. It is used in over 160 higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK, and Vitae also supports almost 200 HEIs globally from 20 different countries. Therefore, one of the key uses and successes of the RDF is that it provides an internationally-recognised route map and language for the professional development of researchers.

What do you think were the key success factors?

a. The RDF p*rovides a common understanding of competencies of effective researchers.* The RDF provides a universal language that researchers can use to recognise and describe their competencies in a language that may be widely understood. For policy makers and funders of research, the RDF provides a common understanding of the competencies of effective researchers and feeds into other approaches, tools and frameworks such as the HREiR Award and the Researcher Development Concordat.

b. *The RDF facilitates researcher mobility within and beyond HE.* Institutions and staff supporting researchers use the RDF to underpin their career and professional development provision for researchers, meaning that individual researchers can move more easily between institutions as they share a common underlying framework. In addition, the universality of the RDF means it is useful for researchers who are preparing for a career beyond academic research, and for employers of researchers within and beyond academia .

What do you think were the barriers?

The RDF has a total of 63 descriptors, which can at first seem overwhelming. Vitae has responded to this by creating a variety of 'lenses' on the RDF. For example, we have a getting started in research lens for doctoral researchers, and also a leadership lens for more experienced researchers. Lenses on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework — Vitae Website

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Funders, professional bodies and employers beyond HE were all involved in the development and validation of the RDF. The RDF is used in the EURAXESS career development platform to link skills to different sector occupations. Vitae has developed a number of lenses on the RDF[1] in partnership with Regulatory and Governmental Bodies such as The Engineering Council and the Intellectual Property Office.

In hindsight, though, we would have built in to the RDF a greater focus on engaging employers beyond HE.

Related to this, researchers preparing to begin careers beyond academia were a secondary audience in the original RDF but this group has become more prominent in recent years. We are currently focused on how the RDF can more fully meet the needs of researchers doing research within and beyond academia *and* those who go beyond research into other parts of higher education or other sectors. As part of this, we will work with employers to further understand the future researcher skills, knowledge and behaviours they need. [1] Lenses on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework — Vitae Website

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

The RDF was developed by Vitae in consultation with the UK higher education sector. The scope of the RDF development was to:

- present the generic descriptors common to researchers in higher education
- seek to describe characteristics of anyone conducting research in UK higher education
- contain other activities related to research that may or may not be undertaken by individual researchers within higher education
- recognise that increasingly as researchers progress through their careers they will conduct research as part of a portfolio of responsibilities in which research may or may not be the main activity
- be aspirational, yet realistic: identifying the attributes of good researchers at different phases of their development
- make no judgement about the career choices researchers make
- attempt to anticipate how the research environment may change through to 2020
- avoid any link to performance appraisal, national or local role profiles, job evaluation exercises or academic promotion procedures

The Framework is grounded in research through interviews and focus groups with over 100 researchers and additional expertise from specialists and stakeholders. Within an iterative, interpretive design, the methods used in the project were: semi-structured interviews with researchers, focus groups, literature reviews, sector wide consultations, specialist reviews

and advice and expert panel review. The interview data were analysed using a phenomenographic approach and the results were validated by an external independent advisory group of expert, established researchers. The resulting Framework captures the knowledge, behaviours and attributes that the higher education sector, overall, has identified as significant for researchers. Therefore the core of the Framework has been determined and defined by the research profession and validated by stakeholders, such as employers and funders.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

Vitae's role is to maintain the integrity of the RDF so that it still functions as a universal framework while at the same time being able to be flexible according to the needs of specific institutions. In our role as custodian of the RDF, we have seen many changes to the research culture and environment over the past 10 years which, in turn, have had an impact on how the RDF is used at all levels. These include changes to the way research is being done, such as the emerging principles relating to RRI/open science, team science and citizen science.

We have seen some important policy themes emerge since the RDF was created, such as wellbeing and mental health and diversity and inclusion. As measures to tackle these are brought in on the ground, we have worked with the sector to create approaches and resources mapped to the RDF. These include use of the RDF for professional development within the context of ensuring good wellbeing and mental health; and supporting RPOs to develop their strategy and implementation of researcher development programmes so they are best equipped to meet the challenges of achieving the new ERA. Vitae will work with the researcher development community to ensure that the RDF continues to meet the needs of the sector now and in the future.

Programme "NaturTalente" University of Vienna (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Austria
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Programme "NaturTalente"
Website (if available)	https://www.uniport.at/naturtalente
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Uniport Karriereservice Universität Wien / Careers Center of the University of Vienna
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2015 – to be continued
Contact	bernhard.wundsam@uniport.at
Short summary of the initiative	

NaturTalente is a high potential programme designed for approx. 30 Master and PhD STEM students majoring in life sciences/medical studies or alternatively in computer studies; it has been successfully carried out for 7 years with media partners to ensure a certain press coverage.

In the course of the programme these excellent students who thrive for a career beyond science are nominated by their faculties. They then have the chance to get to know 6 to 7 companies on site. All participating company partners provide insights into job opportunities and quite also involve the students by letting them work on case-studies, presentations or speed-dating sessions with different departments.

A part from the site visits students have the opportunity to participate in a soft-skill training focusing on personal career development goals, team-work and leadership.

The programme starts in March with an opening ceremony where all stakeholders (nominated students, faculty members, company representatives) get to know each other. In June it ends with a closing ceremony where the students are awarded a certificate which has turned out to be quite useful when it comes to applications in general.

Benefits for students: first-hand insights into companies/careers outside the academic path, motivation for students to get elected, certificate for job applications, network with like-minded excellent students

Benefits for the university: increase in reputation, networks with companies

Benefits for companies: employer branding and recruitment

Why was the initiative launched?

The main goal in the beginning was to draw the (public) attention to excellent students in life sciences. At the same time especially the pharmaceutical industry and the IT sector expressed a special interest in presenting themselves as potential employers. Gradually the programme has become a well-known and appreciated platform for students who are (also) interested in non-academic careers to use the network and learn more about job opportunites.

What are key achievements?

NaturTalente has become a sustainable and appreciated career development network both for students and companies.

What do you think were the key success factors?

As a careers service we know the needs of our students AND of our industry partners (who pay a participation fee of EUR 4,900). It was also quite helpful to win over the ownership of the rectorate and the faculties involved so that students would not apply but where nominated. Finally, the programme is designed to keep time and effort for students, the faculties and companies alike at a low level. That is why a well-structured project management by the careers service is essential. As a result, participating seems to be rewarding for all stakeholders.

What do you think were the barriers?

To convince stakeholders of the benefits and for companies to invest into a programme they did not know.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

No

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

It could be an option to transfer the concept to other fields of study e.g. humanities. For that public funding would be needed.

Young Scientists Mentoring for PhD students and post-docs (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	AUSTRIA
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Young Scientists mentoring programme for PhD students and post-docs
Website (if available)	https://www.aau.at/en/research/young-researchers/
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	University of Klagenfurt
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2016
Contact	doc.service@aau-.at
Short summary of the initiative	

Conditions required for taking part in the Young Scientists Mentoring Programme (YSMP) for doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers who are actively pursuing a research project at the University of Klagenfurt are

- an advanced stage of the research project (approx. two years into the project)
- a subject-specific relevance of the research project to the academic profile of the mentor and the host institution

- interest in an academic career
- readiness to take an active part in the mentoring partnership

The mentees enter into a mentoring agreement with an internationally recognised scholar from a foreign university (or research institution) for a term of one year. The focus is on providing support with regard to the content of their research project in a stimulating international environment, as well as on personal career development. The transfer of knowledge concerning structures, processes and the rules of the game within the sphere of international science promotes deeper integration into the scientific community and opens up new contacts and cooperation opportunities for mentees. In order to plan and execute concrete projects and take the next steps in their academic career, they can additionally attend career-relevant workshops and coaching sessions. Funding is available for travel, accommodation and coaching expenses up to approx. € 3,000 (depending on the destination, length of stay, etc.).

After the annual call for applications mentees are selected by the Research Council of the University of Klagenfurt. In the selection, the Research Council gives particular consideration to whether the choice of mentor and host institution is conducive to the suggested research project and personal career development.

The number of participants is limited

Why was the initiative launched?

 The YSMP was launched in respond of needs for international contacts expressed by professors (as doctoral supervisors), doctoral students or more general early stage researchers (including those working on habilitation). But the YSMP does not only support international networking: The mentees also get support in planning and implementing their next career moves due to the exchange with their already well-established mentors or due to coachings (e.g. to improve language skills, presentation techniques).

What are key achievements?

A key achievement is that the programme addresses not only researchers employed at university; the programme is also open to doctoral students not working as research or teaching assistants at the University of Klagenfurt.

Another key achievement is that the programme is already well established throughout all our faculties. An indication of ongoing interest is the fact that even the last two Corona years couldn't stop the mentees and their mentors although research stays abroad as well as visits in Klagenfurt had to be postponed to a large extend into 2022.

From 2016 onwards, 60 mentees were supported by the YSM.

The programme is well-known not least because of an annual kick off meeting, a presentation of all mentees, their projects and mentors open to all staff and students at the university.

What do you think were the key success factors?

The Institutional enabler: Since 2016, the Vice-Rector for Research is responsible for all concerns with regards to doctoral studies at the University of Klagenfurt. In this context, the so-called Doc.Service was established to plan and implement new initiatives to support early stage researchers as for example the YSMP.

Awareness for the internationalization of doctoral education: At the University of Klagenfurt, a special focus is given on the support of early stage researchers and against this backdrop, on the increasing internationalization of doctoral education. Doctoral students shall be provided with the knowledge, the ability and skills to compete for an international career in academia. International contacts are a key currency of research

Stakeholders: Maybe the most important success factor is the personal commitment of doctoral education stakeholders as the Vice-Rector for Research or above all the supervisors as local mentors: They actively and enthusiastically promote early stage researchers by providing their international contacts to get in touch with potential mentors.

What do you think were the barriers?

-

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

In the course of the last call for applications (February 2022) we asked our target group to provide feedback about the draft version of our call. The doctoral students' feedback was that there is a lack of transparency with regards to the selection

requirements: What exactly is considered when the Research Council decides who will get funding and who won't? Now there are supplementary details in our call.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

-

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

The initiative is well-established. We will work ambitiously to maintain the status quo by ensuring the visibility of the programme within university further on.

Student and graduate panel monitoring at the WU Vienna (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Austria
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Student and graduate panel monitoring
Website (if available)	https://www.wu.ac.at/mitarbeitende/infos-fuer-lehrende/projekte-berichte-in-der-lehre/panelmonitoring
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	WU Vienna
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2012
Contact	Evaluierung@wu.ac.at
Short summary of the initiative	

This project provides crucial information on the participants over their student lifecycle (e.g. about their educational and social backgrounds, career plans and their financial situation) thus providing educational managers and teaching faculty with important insights about students at WU. All reports are automatically generated with R and Latex. In addition automatically generated specialized reports for each Bachelor/-Master Program are provided (if n>20). Due to the immediacy of the feedback from the students to the university management this monitoring project is the major and most crucial feedback instrument.

The monitoring consists of six annual surveys. Bachelor students answer questionnaires at different stages of studies: at the beginning, middle and at the end of their student lifecycle, and 3-5 years after having finished their studies. Likewise master students answer questionnaires at the beginning of their studies, at the time of their graduation and 3-5 years after having finished their studies. All surveys contain questions about the employment status and future career plans of the students. However, the graduate surveys focusses on one hand on career entry and the search for a job. On the other hand, it deals with the current professional situation of the graduates. Various aspects of the professional activity(ies) are examined in detail (eg. Job satisfaction, income, fields of business activity). This survey is conducted at the bachelor's and master's level, whereby individualized questionnaires were used for master's programs, which were tailored to the needs of the programs. The reports are linked back to the programs, key facts (incl. benchmarks) are integrated into the program director's reports, discussed annually in program director meetings and used as a basis for information in program evaluations at WU. This way, the WU can monitor and enhance the job market integration, professional success of job satisfaction of her students.

Why was the initiative launched?

This project was launched to learn more about the students (within their) lifecycle (e.g. about their educational and social backgrounds, job situation, career plans and their financial situation during and after their studies) thus providing educational managers and teaching faculty with important insights about students and alumni. Furthermore, specific feedback on their studies regarding satisfaction as well as relevance (e.g. for their job) provides additional information for the development of the educational offering at WU and whether programs achieve their goals.

What are key achievements?

1. insights into student lifecycle
2. data-driven programme development
3. supporting transition between university and labour market

What do you think were the key success factors?

1. The instrument can easly be adapted to new developments (flexible item blocks) but also allows for comparisons over the years (fixed item blocks)
2. Integration into WU's Online Learning Environment for getting higher response rates
3. dynamic reports with R/Latex: automatically generated specialized reports for each Bachelor/-Master Program are provided

What do you think were the barriers?

1. high fixed costs at the beginning especially with regard to time resources
2. If the instrument does not change over a certain period of time, the monitoring gets seen as a routine

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Focus on the key success factors

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

The student panel monitoring is an internal quality management project with no external funding/support.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

Strengthening the predictive analytical focus of the instrument (e.g. for predicting student success)

Infocursos Portal (Portugal)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Portugal
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Infocursos Portal Portal Infocursos
Website (if available)	https://infocursos.mec.pt/
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	General Directorate for Education and Science Statistics
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2014 / -
Contact	dgeec@dgeec.mec.pt

Short summary of the initiative

The InfoCursos portal (http://infocursos.pt) provides data and statistics on the Higher Vocational Courses (TeSP), 1st cycle Undergraduate Degrees, Integrated Masters and 2nd cycle Masters taught in Portuguese higher education institutions.

Why was the initiative launched?

The project was born out of the need to show secondary school students statistical information on access to higher education courses.

What are key achievements?

The public, particularly parents and students, can find data to enable them to make a more informed choice about courses in higher education. In particular, the percentage of recent course graduates who are registered unemployed, final grades and stability in the course.

What do you think were the key success factors?

Today, Infocursos is in very high demand when students apply for higher education. On the other hand, higher education institutions advertise some of the results of Infocursos in their marketing programmes.

What do you think were the barriers?

We had no barriers to the execution of the project. However, we can say that one of the indicators underwent methodological changes. Registered unemployment. Initially, we only counted the value in December of the previous year. Later we began to include the figures for June and December, as there is seasonality in many activities.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Starting again, we would probably choose another technology to present the graphs. The choice of indicators could be slightly different. For instance, the indicator "Distribution of pupils enrolled by gender" and "Distribution of pupils enrolled by nationality" seem to be the least relevant and could be excluded. Nevertheless, we are very satisfied with the project.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

The Resolution of the Assembly of the Republic No. 176/2017, concerning the recommendation that the government adopt measures to combat failure and dropout in higher education, in its point 18, mentions updating the Infocursos portal.

https://dre.pt/dre/detalhe/resolucao-assembleia-republica/176-2017-107797862

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

At the moment, we would like to keep the information but adopt newer technology to present the results. We expected to add additional indicators and data to the Portal.

Student Journey Observatory at the University of Aveiro (Portugal)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Portugal
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	UAveiro Student Journey Observatory
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	University of Aveiro
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2015 / -
Contact	rubenalves@ua.pt

Short summary of the initiative

UAveiro Student Journey Observatory is a tool for monitoring the academic success of UAveiro students, with information updated monthly and made available to institutional managers and programme directors. The Observatory is built around risk indicators related to access to higher education, their financial situation, their engagement in activities and well-being. Semestrally, it also provides data on students' academic performance. Since last year, information has been presented through a set of dashboards using Microsoft Power BI technology.

Why was the initiative launched?

The Observatory was included in a set of 4 tools integrated in the FICA project (in Portuguese means "stay" and stands for Tools for Dropout Identification and Combat). This project emerged in the context where dropout was a hot topic in the higher

education sector, relating to the financial difficulties that Portugal was going through. At that time, the will of institutional leaders, but also the pressure put on by students, gave rise to additional measures to combat dropout and promote success.

What are key achievements?

The Observatory allows institutional leaders and programme directors to monitor students at risk on a monthly basis, which can trigger some type of preventive action. They can also at the end of each semester analyze the academic performance of students and carry out a wide range of comparative analyses.

What do you think were the key success factors?

The institutional will, either at the beginning of the process, or more recently in its transformation using Microsoft Power BI technology. Public funding was also essential, as recent modernization benefited from funds for administrative modernization.

What do you think were the barriers?

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Learning from experience, perhaps we should have added to the diagnostic tool dynamics that promoted more action based on the observed results. As only information is made available to institutional leaders and programme directors, there is a gap between diagnosis and action.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

Yes, both at the beginning of the project and in its development, the Observatory had some public funding.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

- Intensify the layer Action (and not only diagnosis)
- Add new risk indicators/variables (e.g. study habits)
- Cross-reference the data with other actions to prevent dropout and promote success (leveling courses, levels of teacher participation in the pedagogical development program)
- Cross-reference data with other indicators such as student surveys
- Link student path data with employability data

Interventions to reduce dropouts from ICT programmes at ELTE (Hungary)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Hungary
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Intervention to reduce dropouts from ICT programmes at ELTE
Website (if available)	dtk.elte.hu
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Student Support Centre
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2016-
Contact	takacsrita@inf.elte.hu

Short summary of the initiative

1. The initiative was launched with the main goal of reducing student dropout at ELTE's Faculty of Informatics
    1. The initiative launched the Student Support Center a place for students to turn to when they need help
    2. The main functions of the Student Support Center are:
        1. Providing individual psychological consultation
        2. Providing trainings and workshops
        3. Community-building
        4. Mandatory training courses both for Bsc and Msc students to improve their soft skills
        5. Analyzing data regarding student dropout
            1. Suggesting changes to the curriculum based on empirical data

Why was the initiative launched?

1. The initiative was launched with the main goal of decreasing dropout rates at ELTE's Faculty of Informatics
2. To provide students support when they need it, to build a more supportive environment

To forge a higher sense of community and identity

What are key achievements?

1. Decreasing drop-out rates by 28% (when compared to 2016)
2. Identifying key factors in student attrition based on empirical data
    1. A curriculum reform in 2018 based on empirical data, the revision of different subjects and their place in the curriculum
3. Mandatory trainings and mentoring for all Bsc and Msc students
4. On average, around 50 students per semester have reached out to us seeking individual consultation
5. The concept and the work of the Student Support Center has become widely known among students

What do you think were the key success factors?

1. Building a network of mentor teachers
2. The selection, training and preparation of senior students to provide help to fellow students
3. Using Canvas StudyCoach. This platform provided immense help in following and contacting at-risk students
4. Analyzing data from Neptun to provide an empirical background in the curriculum review and revision
5. The mandatory mentor classes
6. The mandatory soft skill trainings

The creation and facilitation of peer helper groups

What do you think were the barriers?
As there were no projects like this before us in the country, this is really a groundbreaking initiative and as such, there were a few barriers to overcome as the road we have been through was untraveled before us

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?
1. Nothing 2. The goals of the initiative were reached and every mistake that may have been made along the way lead to important revelations 3. All important feedbacks were implemented to the betterment of the initiative

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?
No national policies or programmes supported the initiative. It was built by self-effort

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?
The initiative is constantly being monitored and we try to grab every opportunity to develop it 1. The second-semester mentoring project has just launched, which we plan to develop constantly 2. The training of demonstrator students is currently being revised Other than the initial training, from this semester, we provide mid-semester invervision Which is planned to made compulsory in following semesters We are working of making the use of Canvas StudyCoach a more integral part in the mentoring process

Mindfulness programme at the University of Algarve (Portugal)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Portugal
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Interculturality and Mindfulness programme (PIM)
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	University of Algarve (UAlg)
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2018 – there is no prediction on when it is going to end
Contact	snjesus@ualg.pt ; robertochiodelli@yahoo.com.br
Short summary of the initiative	

 The Interculturality and Mindfulness Program (PIM) was developed with the intention to both promote integrative acculturation as well as utilize the benefits of mindfulness to support psychological well-being among university students. More than 150 university students have concluded this program in the University of Algarve (UAlg).

PIM consists of six weekly sessions lasting two hours each. At the end of each session, through e-mail or whatsapp, participants receive a summary of what has been covered on and an audio file for the indicated guided meditation practice. Between sessions, participants receive a message of encouragement to do the weekly task practices (mindfulness). On average, groups are composed of 8-15 students and 1 or 2 facilitators.

Interculturality and Mindfulness Program (PIM) overview

Sessions	Activities
0) Program Presentation	Welcoming; "Ice-breaker": ball game; Program presentation; Mindfulness practice

1) Introduction and group integration *"Land in sight: welcome to the University environment!"/ Being present*	Facilitators and program Introduction; "Ice-breakers": planning seats and rotatory interviews; "Culture Shock" activity; Mindfulness presentation and body scan
2) Positive Intercultural Attitude I *"Anchorage"/ Mindfulness in the daily routine*	"Sharing"; "Warm-up": Rá game; "Ice-breaker": Three sentences activity; Difficulties and strategies to acculturation; Informal Mindfulness meditation: Mindful eating practice
3) Positive Intercultural Attitude II *"(Re) Socialization"/ Body and Emotions*	"Sharing"; "Warm-up": Imaginary objects activity; Cultural knowledge: chocolate game; Stages of cultural adaptation; Acceptance; Emotions in the body practice
4) Intercultural Communication I *"Verbal and nonverbal communication"/ Self Compassion*	"Sharing"; "Warm-up": 1, 2, 3 game; Behavioral differences in communication; Self-compassion; Walking Mindfully practice; Loving-Kindness Meditation
5) Intercultural Communication II *"What do we have in common?"/ Observing thoughts and Gratitude*	"Sharing"; Warm-up: "Pim game" and "Hot Potato"; "Proverb's game"; Group bubbles; Observing thoughts; Gratitude
6) Program Completion *"Weaving the Support Network"/ Week 6 is the rest of our lives*	"Sharing"; Warm-up: "Weaving Connections activity"; Social support network; Rhythmic Breath meditation; "Week 6 is the rest of our lives"; Final Celebration

Why was the initiative launched?

The university context, in general, has amplified its internationalization system, providing a more multicultural environment. In addition, it has been showing continuous increases in the number of students searching for mental health services, notably due to depression and anxiety. These two phenomena are not necessarily correlated, but certainly challenge academic institutions on how to embrace this reality.

Currently, University of Algarve (UAlg) has the largest rate of international students (23%) in Portugal, ranging from more than 70 nationalities. Moreover, the university has a large percentage of "displaced" students, who are from Portugal but do not come from the city/region in which the university is located.

It is known that mental health issues, if not receiving the necessary attention, besides affecting students' performance, can lead to academic dropout. By 2018, the dropout rate of undergraduate students was 29% in Portugal.

In order to reduce dropout rates and promote academic success, the UAlg Support Office for Pedagogical Innovation promoted the implementation of PIM, which was developed in early 2018 by Roberto Chiodelli and Diana Fernandes Oliveira, both Psychology doctoral students under the supervision of Professor Saúl Neves de Jesus.

What are key achievements?

Two studies, submitted to scientific journals, were conducted to assess PIM's effects on academic students. Study 1 evaluated three groups [face-to-face (n = 70), online (n = 44) and control (n = 36)] at two times (pre and posttest). The face-to-face group demonstrated a positive interaction effect on awareness and life satisfaction, while the online group indicated a favorable interaction effect on impulse. The results showed a significant beneficial impact on stress, emotion regulation, mindfulness, positive solitude, and optimism in both PIM formats (in-person and synchronous online). These findings demonstrate that, compared to the passive control group, both in-person (IG) and online (OG) formats had a positive impact on most variables analyzed. In general, IG and OG were equivalent in terms of their effects.

Study 2 compared the PIM in-person and synchronous online formats in three times (pre, post, and follow-up tests). The main finding pointed to a predominant superiority of the synchronous online intervention over the face-to-face intervention in the effects of the PIM when analyzing the results of the follow-up tests, which took place three months after the intervention. In addition, the variables depression and anxiety, which had not shown representative reductions in the pre-posttest analysis, indicated improvements in the online group. The hypothesis found to explain the positive results of the online format lies in the

fact that participants in the online group develop greater self-efficacy to perform mindfulness tasks at home, since in this format the "dependence" or importance of the group tends to be lower than the face-to-face group.

What do you think were the key success factors?

The main key success factor was the alignment between the promotion of intercultural competence and mindfulness skills. It attracted students to participate, as well as offered a space for them to learn and express themselves. The fundamental principle of this intervention was to establish a welcoming and trusting atmosphere, precisely to reduce students' acculturative stress and to develop group cohesion. The program offers many practical activities, which elicit the topics to be worked on, generating, afterwards, a group discussion.

Finally, the university support in arranging logistic possibilities to apply the program, as well as supporting PIM's propagation among students was crucial for its success.

What do you think were the barriers?

As we received the university support in finding adequate rooms and supporting in the promotion of PIM, barriers were very few. In my opinion, having the institution support is crucial when applying a mental health intervention. Then, the second biggest challenge is being able to attract students in order to participate in PIM. As it didn't provide ECTs, we really have to convince them of the intervention importance. So, publicizing is very important and two weeks in advance of the first session, facilitators offer a PIM presentation meeting (Session zero). Eventually, the program has become better known in UAlg, so students adhesion has become a smaller concern.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

I would basically offer a participant's manual to students with description about practices and content, which we already have and is very helpful.

This is an interesting question, because the improvements made during PIM's implementation were due to the fact we had the first experiences. So, it seems like I would start the same way as it led me here. For instance, the initial intention was to offer an adaptation support program to Brazilian students, as they are the most representative foreign university students at UAlg (10%). Consequently, the first three groups were aimed at students of Brazilian nationality and we learned a lot from them. But we noticed the need to "open" the intervention to all nationalities. Then, the first PIM group implemented for students of all nationalities occurred in the first semester of 2019 and 13 groups with this population have been successfully applied ever since. But those first groups were necessary to have an experience with all nationalities.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

No, but it would be amazing.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

The initiative continues in UAlg, and the intention is to replicate PIM in other universities and institutions. A PIM's protocol report article was submitted last year, so future research with the same intervention can be done by other investigators.

Any additional information

Three studies on PIM have been submitted to scientific journals: (1) "Interculturality and Mindfulness Program: a protocol report of an intervention with university students"; (2) "Effects of the Interculturality and Mindfulness Program (PIM) in university students: a quasi-experimental study"; (3) "Comparison between an in-person and a synchronous online mindfulness-based intervention: a quasi-experimental study".

Student support journey designed to meet the needs of online learners (Ireland)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Ireland
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Student support journey – Online Learning at IT Sligo
Website (if available)	https://www.itsligo.ie/ and https://www.atu.ie/
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Institute of Technology, Sligo (to be part of Atlantic Technological University (ATU) from 1 April 22)
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	Start 2018 End June 2022
Contact	mccormack.jacqueline@itsligo.ie

Short summary of the initiative

IT Sligo has received funding from the Higher Education Authority 'Innovation and Transformation Fund' in order to undertake two projects related to online/flexible learning. Via one of the projects, Higher Ed4All, we have developed flexible, full-time, online/blended degree programmes for students who would find it too challenging to attend an on-campus course –for a range of reasons such as: caring/family business responsibilities; disability; social communication barrier; cost; or geographical isolation. We are implementing an innovative model of learning in order to better facilitate equality of opportunity and access to higher education across Ireland. The other project (iNOTE) is being carried out in collaboration with GMIT and LYIT and seeks to build digital capability for flexible learning delivery in West/North West region. In that project IT Sligo is specifically leading in the development of student support services for online/flexible learners.

Why was the initiative launched?

For the HigherEd4All project we recognised that there are barriers to cohorts such as family carers or students with some types of disabilities in being able to undertake a full-time on-campus degree. Instead, their only option is a part-time taken over a long period of time. By offering these full-time mode online degrees we are promoting equality for these students in being able to complete their degrees in the same time frame. We have partnered with Family Carers Ireland and The Disability Federation of Ireland to undertake this project to ensure we are working to address barriers and facilitators for these students in engagement and success. In the iNOTE Project IT Sligo has mapped out the student journey of an online student in their path from prospective student to graduation and implemented a suite of student supports to ensure equivalency to supports provided to on campus students.

What are key achievements?

Under HigherEd4All Two full-time online degrees have been launched and another is in the pipeline and several student cohorts are currently completing the degrees. In the iNOTE project a wide range of student supports have been implemented along the student journey and are being piloted across IT Sligo and the other ATU partner colleges. Having these support services in place put us in a stronger place when having to pivot our on-campus provision to emergency remote teaching in the COVID-19 emergency – when our "on-campus" students were having to access supports remotely.

What do you think were the key success factors?

Working in partnership with Family Carers Ireland and The Disability Federation of Ireland in planning the degree programmes on HigherEd4All. In both projects we have parallel research projects assessing the barriers and facilitators to online higher education and the efficacy of digital mental health and well-being supports for higher education students.

What do you think were the barriers?

A significant barrier has been that full-time online students in Ireland are not deemed eligible to receive financial support (SUSI grant) in the same way that full-time on-campus students are, owing to there being an "attendance" requirement. Currently live, synchronous online attendance is not deemed acceptable for this support. This is discriminatory against these students, who cannot attend campus, and places full time higher education it beyond their, often limited, financial and physical means. We

have lobbied nationally for this to change and are eagerly awaiting the outcome of the national review. We have also had difficulties related to

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

It is unfortunate that we have been unable to resolve the SUSI grant issue but we are hoping this will be resolved in the national review. There is always more that could be done more User Experience testing for our student supports. Also, perhaps could have further considered integration of services for online and on-campus students.

Did national policies/programmes/support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

National policy in Ireland is that full-time online students are not deemed eligible to receive financial support (SUSI grant) in the same way that full-time on-campus students are, owing to there being an "attendance" requirement. Currently live, synchronous online attendance is not deemed acceptable for this support. This is discriminatory against these students, who cannot attend campus, and places it beyond their, often limited, financial means.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

If the SUSI grant entitlement issue is resolved (and there is a national review underway) then we would intend to continue our full-time online provision for these under-represented groups. With regards to our supports for online students on their learning journey, we are continually each year enhancing and extending these supports.

Practical training in education studies (Slovenia)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Slovenia
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Pedagogical practice and practical training at the Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska / Pedagoška praksa in praktično usposabljanje na Pedagoški fakulteti Univerze na Primorskem
Website (if available)	www.pef.upr.si
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	University of Primorska Faculty of Education
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	Started in 2018
Contact	nina.krmac@pef.upr.si
Short summary of the initiative	

The initiative was launched to improve practical training and pedagogical practice and strengthen the link between the faculty and the schools where students perform their practical training. The emphasis was on strengthening communication and cooperation between the student, coordinator of the pedagogical practice at the faculty, and teacher mentor at the school.

To achieve this goal, several focus groups were conducted, with the help of which the opinions and experience of the principals and teacher mentors were gained. It was especially investigated how those teacher mentors experience cooperation with the faculty and how with the students during the practical training.

Before the beginning of the pedagogical practice and practical training, weekly meetings with students are organized. Within these meetings, students acquire knowledge about various teaching methods, communication, and etiquette. Within pedagogical practice and practical training students acquire general and subject-specific competencies. The students take account of the developmental characteristics, principles, and the factors of effective learning in the planning and implementing classes, develop the ability to apply various strategies for immediately working in different subject areas. The students master the basic principles and procedures of planning, implementation, and evaluation of the learning process

in cooperation with the teacher mentor, use a broad variety of learning and teaching methods and strategies that stimulate pupils' mental activities.

The meetings are also organized to help understand students the importance of networking and to help them understand that the environment in which they conduct practical training can represent their potential employer. Through the meetings, the students also learn how to present themselves and how important it is to be constantly involved in activities that were not required within the study obligations.

The initiative strengthens the importance of feedback from both students and mentors in schools and the importance of self-reflection on skills and acquired knowledge.

The initiative thus brings reflective meetings with students and teacher mentors after the practical training. With the desire to continuously improve the cooperation and the course of practical training.

Instructions for the implementation of practical training for students and mentors at schools were upgraded and improved within the initiative. A template for writing a pedagogical practice diary was also designed for students. According to the students, this template brought greater reliability and organization in performing pedagogical practice. Examples of the diary and lesson plans were created for the student, which, according to the students, helped them to increase security and to better understand what is required of them.

Visiting professors are also involved in the initiative. Before practical training at the school or institution starts, they are invited to an interview in front of the students, e.g., teachers who present their career and professional development (the interviewer is usually the coordinator of pedagogical practice at the faculty). At the end of the interview, students can ask various questions, including more specific, administrative, and not so substantive. So, such questions for which they do not receive answers within the study (career advancement, etc.). Foreign professors in the field of communication and those with a lot of experience and interesting careers are also invited to the initiative. Coordinators for pedagogical practice also attended various training related to pedagogical practice and practical training. Participations brought collaborations and have contributed to learning about other practices.

The initiative is presented mainly for the case of the study program Primary School Teaching. The initiative is based on the idea of unifying a similar system of work at the level of the entire faculty.

Why was the initiative launched?

We started this initiative to raise students' awareness that the annual practical training is not only an obligation that they must complete within the study but an important opportunity for their career and professional development. We wanted them to understand the importance of networking and integration into the environment in which they conduct practical training.

An important factor in the emergence of the initiative were also various meetings with principals and teacher mentors, who highlighted their views and ideas on improving the current course of practical training. They emphasized the responsibility, the way of working, and the importance of communication on the part of students.

What are key achievements?

The established initiative has strengthened communication and cooperation with schools and institutions. Increased participation has also improved the quality of mentoring in schools and more knowledge acquired by students. Students became more reflective and began to attach more importance to practical training. The goals and obligations of the practical training became clearer for the students with the designed template.

What do you think were the key success factors?

The most important factors that contributed to the success of the initiative were focus groups with teacher mentors, feedback for students at the end of practical training by the mentors in schools, and reflective meetings with the coordinator and students, which strengthened the importance of professional development and self-knowledge.

What do you think were the barriers?

COVID-19 has certainly been an obstacle to the implementation of practical training in the last two years. The opportunity to use online platforms made the situation easier, so the implementation of the practice and instructions for students was

partially adapted to the current situation. Certain students conducted the practical training via an online platform because the distance learning.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

No major adaptations of the initiative seem necessary. The idea was well-thought-out and the implementation worked well. Perhaps the only change we see is that the coordinators of all study programs would meet at the beginning. Through a joint meeting, we could share experiences and try to create a common system of practical training with adjustments according to the specifics of each study program.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

The initiative was not supported by other stakeholders because it was created only at the faculty level.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

Certainly, it is necessary to ensure the implementation of focus groups and reflective meetings with students as well as with mentors at schools and institutions in all study programs as part of practical training. Only the constant sharing of experiences of all stakeholders in practical training and pedagogical practice can lead to quality cooperation and implementation.

OEHA! Digital sustainability and career opportunities of smart phones (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Austria
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	ÖHA! How does my mobile phone affect the environment? Free learning materials to support ecologically responsible media use in schools and beyond
Website (if available)	https://oeha.phwien.ac.at/
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Pädagogische Hochschule Wien / University College of Teacher Education Vienna
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2019 - 2021
Contact	martin.sankofi@phwien.ac.at

Short summary of the initiative

Why is using the internet bad for our climate? What is inside my smartphone? Under what conditions are the individual parts produced? Discussing and finding answers to questions like these is the main concern of the project ÖHA!. ÖHA! stands for "ecologically responsible media use" and offers free learning and teaching materials including worksheets, videos, quizzes and Augmented Reality (AR).

These materials are available for free on the project website, in an app for IOS and Android as well as in print.

The projects aims to make children and teenagers aware of what the lifecycle of a smartphone has to do with climate change and what impact the development, production, use and disposal of a phone can have on our environment.

Keywords: Global Education, digitization, ecology, sustainable media use and media literacy

Why was the initiative launched?

Following a call by the Innovation Foundation for Education (Innovationsstiftung für Bildung) ÖHA! was initiated by the Centre for Learning Technology and Innovation (ZLI) of the University College of Teacher Education Vienna (PH Wien). The project ran between 09/01/2019 and 01/31/2021.

A research team consisting of academics and teachers decided to tackle the issues of digitalization, sustainability and learning, mainly because they were interested in a state-of-the-art issue that could combine learning and saving the planet. Combining the topics of digitalization and sustainability was a key element of the project. The project aims at creating an awareness of what the lifecycle of a smartphone has to do with the environment and climate change and what impact a smartphone can have. We also wanted to stay close to their everyday reality.

Furthermore, digital sustainability is embedded in the Austrian curriculum for Basic IT Education (Digitale Grundbildung) and in the framework of digital competences. Sustainability has not been tackled much in learning materials and thus the team wanted to fill that gap by creating attractive and innovative learning materials FROM students FOR students. ÖHA! aimed to make the topics mentioned above accessible and understandable for younger age groups, especially for children at primary and secondary level. The ÖHA! learning resources are supposed to open young people's eyes and minds and consequently bring about greater justice, equity and human rights.

The FFG call furthermore asked to incorporate a Citizen Science approach, a form of collaborative and simultaneous learning, in the project. This was also something the PH Wien team had never done before. Within the Citizen Science approach learners, teachers and interested parties are directly involved in the development of teaching and learning materials. Thus, materials from students for students could be created and a dialogue between science, school and society could be established, which allowed the know-how and needs of the users to flow directly into the development of the materials.

One other consideration of the project was the fact that girls have been underrepresented in STEM courses and technology professions for years. Therefore this project aimed to encourage them and arise their interest in these fields of study and employment by means of a topic that is close to their reality.

What are key achievements?

- Production of state-of-the-art learning materials from students for students and teachers
- Collaboration of various institutions
- Wide discussion about a globally important issue from various angles

What do you think were the key success factors?

- Cooperation with schools and teachers: Through a year-long cooperation with two classes (one primary school level, one secondary school level) it was possible to create learning materials from students for students (e.g. short videos, presentations and worksheets). In this way, a way of cooperation could be established (as required in the Citizen Science approach), in which the ideas as well as needs of the "prosumers" (producers and consumers alike) could flow directly into the development of the materials.
- Cooperation with organizations beyond the school context: The cooperation with various organizations was extremely fruitful. One of these organizations was a museum especially aimed at children, another organization was Socius, a non-governmental organization that recycles electronic devices and makes them available to people with lower incomes. A third organization was Amlogy, a start-up company that makes worksheets come to life through augmented reality.

What do you think were the barriers?

The project team had initially planned to involve a wider public in the project. Due to COVID this was not possible (the planned exhibition had to be cancelled and citizen science approach had to be downsized)

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

As mentioned initially, the project should also enable learning which is not limited to the classroom but can be transferred into various contexts and inspire learners to take an active, participatory and critical role.

Due to the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, the Citizen Science approach was difficult to realize on all levels. It was difficult to organize face-to-face meetings on a greater scale and so the initial idea to create a pop-up exhibition and make it available to the public had to be cancelled altogether. This also meant that the PH Wien team could not work together with the renowned Zoom children's museum in Vienna.

However, some smaller scale citizen science activities could be carried out: i.e. an open discussion on sustainability: what can the individual do to create a digital future that enhances our lives sociologically and ecologically? This was interesting but was really held on a small scale and was an online event

Apart from that, we had calls and initiatives to publicly use and assess our materials within the process of creating the materials. This was also difficult to realize during the pandemic.

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

The project, which ran between 09/01/2019 and 01/31/2021, was partially funded by the Innovation Foundation for Education (Innovationsstiftung für Bildung).

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

Continuous dissemination through papers and teacher training; materials are available for purchase and free download on the project website https://oeha.phwien.ac.at/.

Any additional information

Digital sustainability is embedded in the Austrian curriculum for Digital Basic Education (Digitale Grundbildung) and in the framework of www.digikomp.at. It is therefore particularly important to introduce children and young people to this topic as early as possible.

Links

- OEHA! Website: https://oeha.phwien.ac.at/
- OEHA! video on vimeo: https://vimeo.com/515444359
- OEHA app (App Store): t1p.de/oeha-app-apple
- OEHA app (Google Play Store): t1p.de/oeha-app

Student work (Slovenia)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Slovenia
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Student work and Register of Student Work/Študentsko delo in Evidenca študentskega dela
Website (if available)	https://www.e-di.si
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Študentska organizacija Slovenije (Slovenian Students' Union)
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2018-
Contact	marko.rupercic@studentska-org.si

Short summary of the initiative

Student work (temporary or occasional work of students and high school students) is flexible type of work, accessible only to students and high school students in Slovenia. It is provided by student work agencies (currently 16 private employment agencies, specialized for student work), has set minimal hourly wage (in line with minimum wage for full-time employment) and thus enables students to gain extra income and work experiences during education. About two-thirds of students and high school students conduct student work each year, on average between 2 and 3 months per year. Student work represents about 3 % of the whole Slovenian labour market. Students can perform different student jobs- from help in administration, bar service to professional work connected to their field of studies such as help in accounting services, computer programming, project work, etc. However, regardless of the type of work students perform, they can obtain

valuable skills and competencies that help them later in life. Research (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2014) shows that 64.6 % of the students who performed student work during schooling were after finishing school employed at one of the companies where they worked as students.

Register od student work is implemented as information database into which all student work agencies are obliged to send information of student work, done in previous month. For students, it works as an online platform, where student work is documented and allows for students to add acquired competences and prepare and download official confirmation of gained relevant work experiences.

Why was the initiative launched?

Student work gives an opportunity to earn additional income to cover study and other related costs, while providing valuable work experiences. As a type of work it was gradually developed into today's form since the 1960's. Register of student work is initiative, launched in 2017 with the aim to provide a tool for lifelong career orientation for youth; provide information on previous work experiences for Employment Service of Slovenia; give statistical information on student work market for Ministry of Work; give a tool for inspection surveillance to Labour Inspectorate.

What are key achievements?

With register of student work: implementation itself; integration of ISCO classification and ESCO competences into formerly unclassified student work; having detailed information on the type and quantity of conducted student work, giving valuable data for making informed decisions.

What do you think were the key success factors?

Considering student work, the need for flexible type of work for students and high school students, which enables smooth entering into labour market during the time of education. For register of student work it was the meeting of needs of students to be able to gain credible documentation of acquired work experiences and needs of state institutions to gain more control over student work market.

What do you think were the barriers?

For register the largest barrier before implementation was to present the need of students for such platform; after the start of the project the challenge was to synchronize needs of different stakeholders (government and other public entities with private companies- student work agencies).

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Hardly anything. Different issues needed to be addressed and solved in order for the project to be successfully implemented.

Did national policies/programmes/support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

Yes, Student work is legislatively regulated in a way, which enables student work as flexible type of work, combining education and work easily. Register of student work was enacted with Labour Market Regulation Act in 2017, giving Slovenian Students Union public mandate for running it. Supported also by EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018, National Programme for Youth 2013-2022, EU initiative Youth Guarantee, and partnership agreement between Slovenia and European Commission, the project was financially supported with ESF funds.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

There are plans to develop register in a way to include other information on competences, graduates have acquired during studies, for example volunteer work and competences gained with formal or non-formal education.

Young Expert System (Hungary)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Hungary
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Young Expert System / Fiatal Szakértői Rendszer
Website (if available)	https://hunexpert.hu/
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Hunexpert
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	2019
Contact	Info@hunexpert.hu

Short summary of the initiative

The Young Expert System is a database through which we reach researchers, experts and talents in various fields, who can support companies with their special knowledge through their work in the given field, for example, by preparing research, studies, extracts and decision-making materials. In this way, we can effectively incorporate the missing knowledge into the operation of companies through the help of the System. We have established close cooperation with the National Association of Doctoral Students in Hungary various universities and professional colleges, thus ensuring that we can reach as many researchers and doctoral students as possible who are willing to undertake expert work. In this way, young experts can gain valuable work experience and use their knowledge. Project work carried out through System can be cross-border, it does not involve a longer commitment, so young researchers can carry out their tasks from anywhere, anytime in alignment with their studies. As a member of the System, they can join professional and scientific activities of companies, receive information about events and tenders related to scientific life in the region, which provides a good opportunity to stay in touch with fellow researchers across the region.

Why was the initiative launched?

The Young Expert System was established in order to provide young researchers and experts with valuable experience by giving them the opportunity to support the activities of a given company professionally and scientifically.

What are key achievements?

We currently reach more than 700 people through the Expert System. Since 2019, we have completed 57 successful projects and engaged more than 60 experts in different research areas. Our projects have included the following research areas:

- Artificial intelligence (AI)
- Digital education
- Digital equality of opportunity
- e-Finance solutions
- Self-driving and connected vehicles in Hungary

Contributed proposals:

- Moór Gyula jurisprudence tender
- Digital Security Policy Scientific Research tender
- The digitalization context of the data economy tender
- The digitization aspect of administrative law tender

What do you think were the key success factors?

HUNEXPERT not only connects the experts and the companies, but also takes care of the implementation of the research projects, including the entire administration and communication, so that the experts only have to deal with the professional implementation, while the client can receive the finished work, even in a proofread and publishable form.

Reaching out **up-to-date expert audience** by our **network**, those who are in the academic sector (strong **R&D** involvement).

What do you think were the barriers?

In the Hungarian market, there is less of a tendency to hire external experts, which is more common abroad. The Hungarian labour market still needs to improve in this respect.

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

- More resources would be allocated in the initial period
- We would contact student unions and student organisations earlier and in greater numbers
- Conduct a wider range of market research
- Develop closer links with the Chamber of Commerce

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

The Digital Wellbeing Programme has supported the organisation from the very beginning, providing project opportunities in various research areas for members of the scheme.

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

We consider it important to address young people of other nationalities across the border, for whom it may also be motivating to become more closely involved in the scientific circulation of the Central European region. We consider it important that the System is not only a database, but also a professional, scientific community for its members. Our goal is to involve not only young people studying in Hungarian higher education institutions, but also foreign students studying, working and living in the region. Harmonize the webpage language for international partnerships.

Klagenfurt Scholarship (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Austria
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Klagenfurt Scholarship
Website (if available)	https://www.aau.at/partner-foerderer/die-universitaet-klagenfurt-foerdern/klagenfurtstipendium/
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	University of Klagenfurt
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	Ongoing
Contact	Lisa.svetina@aau.at

Short summary of the initiative

The Klagenfurt scholarship promotes outstanding Master's students whose career paths indicate top performance in their studies and careers. Companies get to know talented students and junior staff, establish contacts with the university and strengthen their image. They have the opportunity to award their scholarship for a specific field of study and are networked with suitable students. The scholarship holders are not only supported monetarily, they also get the opportunity to complete internships with their sponsor, write their Master's thesis, work on projects and thus get to know their future potential employer. The Klagenfurt scholarship was launched in 2018 by the University of Klagenfurt together with political representatives of the city of Klagenfurt.

Why was the initiative launched?

The demand for ICT specialists on the Carinthian labour market is increasing enormously. For this reason, the Klagenfurt scholarship is mainly aimed at Bachelor graduates from the fields of technology and business. As a lighthouse project in Austria, the scholarship also attracts young potentials from other federal states (back) to Carinthia for a Master's degree. You also have the option of awarding your scholarship for a specific subject area.

What are key achievements?

Companies gain young talent: Scholarship providers can establish contacts with highly qualified students at an early stage and inspire them for their company. As a networking platform, the scholarship can also be the starting point for intensive cooperation with your company in the form of internships, project work, etc.

Supporting programme & contact with Klagenfurt University: As part of the Klagenfurt scholarship, we network companies individually and personally with your scholarship holders at various events such as networking meetings, business talks, scholarship celebrations, etc. The Klagenfurt scholarship is also a starting point for intensive cooperation with your company. With the Klagenfurt scholarship, companies also get to know contact persons at the university.

Increasing Carinthia's attractiveness as a location: The Klagenfurt Scholarship bundles important forces in the state: The state capital of Klagenfurt, relevant stakeholders from the economy and committed private individuals work together for the future of Carinthia in order to position the region for the future in the international competition for bright minds. This will benefit the province of Carinthia and the labour market in the long term

What do you think were the key success factors?

- Public Private Partnerhship
- Excellent and highly motivated scholarship holders
- Early guided contact between scholarship holders and companies

What do you think were the barriers?

- Permanent receipt of public funds as the basis for the Matching Fund Scholarship
- High permanent networking effort between companies and scholarship holders

If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?

No

Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?

Depending on public funding, the initiative will be expanded further. There is interest among companies.

Study and Work programme at Johannes Kepler University Linz (Austria)

Key facts about the initiative	
Country	Austria
Name of the initiative (in English/in the local language)	Study and Work programme / Study and Work
Website (if available)	https://www.jku.at/studium/studierende/study-and-work/
Name of organisation implementing the initiative	Johannes Kepler University Linz
Year it started and ended/is expected to end	Start: 2021
Contact	Mag. Florian Mayer (florian.mayer@jku.at)

Short summary of the initiative

The Study and Work programme is a project to help students find a part-time job in a study-related field in order to gain relevant practical work experience. All the jobs are presented on a special "study & work" jobplatform and actively promoted by the university. In order to prevent students from dropping out of the studies before graduating, participating companies have to accept certain guidelines that guarantee students to find a good balance between studying and working and give them the possibility to be flexible, particularly in regard to working hours so they can attend necessary courses and exams.

Some of those guidelines are for example:

- Jobs must supply study-relevant work experience

- Maximum amount of 15-20 working hours per week

- Mentor in an other division in the company

- Possibility to change the work schedule every semester to arrange that students can attend at every necessary course or exam

- Companies also have to get sure that students are doing their courses and exams by regularly checking that they achieve a special amount of ECTS per year

Why was the initiative launched?

About 70% of our students is not only studying, but also working at the same time. At the moment, the JKU is experiencing a higher drop-out rate and is losing students before they have graduated as there is a high demand in the labor market for certain areas of study (esp. STEM degree programs, informatics, but also in econonical degrees such as tax and audit). The program aims to provide support to students working part-time to help them complete their studies in a reasonable amount of time. We hope that by actively creating relevant part-time student job opportunities that are flexible, particularly in regard to work hours, students will be able to find a good balance between studying and working.

What are key achievements?

1. The framework has been defined, the programme has oficially startet and the first companies have started to participate. At the moment 14 companies are participating with 27 jobs for almost every academic degree program and the first students started to work at participating companies.
2. Allowing students to gain relevant practical know-how early on in their career and thus further enhancing their job opportunities. They can get to know companies and different fields of working possibilities and by gaining work experience increasing their labour market value.
3. Allowing companies to find future fulltime employees and do employer branding by getting students working part-time and get to know the company.

What do you think were the key success factors?

Key success factor for us was finding companies who are willing to participate in the program, commiting to the guidelines and who are providing mentoring for students to encourage them to finish their studies.In the end the programme provides an additional value for companies, students and university.

What do you think were the barriers?
Companies have to commit to the program and acknowledge the advantages when students are not dropping out of the respective degree programs in favor of a job.
If you were to start again, what would you do differently?
So far we are just at the beginning of developing this program. We will be happy to share our experiences at a later time.
Did national policies/programmes/funding support the initiation/implementation/development of the initiative? If so, how?
No.
Do you have plans to further develop the initiative? If so, what are they?
At the moment we are trying to find more companies who are willing to participate in order to create a broad offer of different jobs for our students. We are also implementing a process to control that all of the participants comply with the guidelines.

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Acknowledgements