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UK CORVET Report March 2012 Turkey Visit

Reflections

The UK Team (leader and five learners) landed at the Ankara Airport on Sunday 11 March 2012 at 15.15 local time. Ali Erdem, Programme Manager at the EU Education and Youth Programs Provincial Coordinator at Kirsehir Education Department greeted us at the airport together with his learner, Ozlem, who was to become our guide during the second part of the visit, a cultural and educational visit of the capital Ankara. During the two hours journey by a minibus to Kirsehir, the learners introduced each other and there was an amicable flow of conversation ranging from education, culture to political situations in both England and Turkey.

At 19.00 the UK team was gradually introduced to the etiquette and finer aspects Turkish culture. A range of Turkish cuisine which was attentively presented by the waiters and the ingredients explained by a group of enthusiastic Turkish learners and their leaders. Despite the long journey (we had left London at about 4am), both the teams continued learning about each other until the late hours. The UK team had not finished here, they quickly rushed to their room to prepare for the workshops starting the next day.

On Monday 12th March 2012, the UK team met the Italian counterparts who arrived safely early that morning at 3am after some delays in Istanbul, having chased their luggage around both in Italy and Turkey! After breakfast, we boarded a specially chartered bus to take us to **Capadoccia**. On the way we stopped by for a guided tour of **Hacibektas** and then arrived in **Avanos** where we met the German team for lunch. After lunch, with the whole group now together we were finally on our way to the ancient place of **Cappadocia** which, in its hey days, accommodated many people, especially Catholics who were escaping Roman persecution. The highlight of the day was a visit to the underground caves of **Kaymakli**. For more on these ancient wonder there is a separate journal that has been prepared by one of the UK learners.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

The workshop on Tuesday 13th March 2012 was intensive and informative when all partners shared the Career Orientations within their individual countries. Learners also had the opportunity to engage in the discussions and share their experiences during the presentation sessions. Turkey and Germany kick-started the workshop in the morning and after lunch there was visit to the Technical High School to see students in their classes and at various vocational stations. All the equipment seemed modern and students could only work under strict supervision of the class teacher and, in the case of the lathe operations, only the teacher was allowed to use this modern machinery while the students watched how it was operated. The head, Mr. Sami Duman, mentioned this was necessary because Health and Safety was of paramount importance for all parties, teachers and learners, but also the cost of the equipment which was several thousands of £s. After the Technical School, we were escorted to the Kirsehir Education Department where we were greeted by the director, Mr. Halil Sahin. Our visit was reported in the local TV news and a reporter from the TV station was at hand and asked questions to the director and the visitors which was promptly translated by Ali Erdem.

Career Orientation in Turkey starts from an early stage. Importance is given to the individual and starts with personal, family and societal goals. Learners are exposed to career prospects at all three levels and in schools, teachers are asked to deliver aspects of career advice which is enshrined in the Turkish Basic Law on Education Provisions. While teachers are responsible for the delivery, career guidance and information services is coordinated nationally by the Turkish Employment Service Research Centre (TESRC) which facilitates the training of teachers and career advisors throughout the 81 provinces in Turkey. With the help of TESRC psychometric tests are also organized nationally and teachers may avail these services as and when needed. Each school and vocational centre also has a Counselling Department which is responsible for carrying out these tests, especially the national standardised tests that take place at age 14. After this test, learners are guided, according to their scores, on various routes arts (painting and music), sciences, social sciences, Foreign Languages, Turkish, Mathematics and Sports. As in UK, the schools in Turkey are also ranked and have league tables and with career guidance focused towards higher education there is a lot of pressure on learners at 14 to do well as the norms of society and expectations are somewhat different. Just like UK, it seems Vocational Education, although widely available, does not take priority and societal views mean it is also considered second rate after the academic routes of sciences and mathematics.

Germany's approach to Career Orientation places emphasis on the development stage from the self-discovery to realization and possibilities in the work place. The



development stages are incorporated within the curriculum and learners are exposed to this material during their schooling generally starting at the age of 12. As part of their learning, learners also focus on the principles, didactic material and the practical phase of their career journey. Within the didactic phase emphasis is placed on the Portfolio Method where learners gather evidence on the learning methods, personal development and instruments used in the assessment, judgment and evaluation during their career orientation journeys. There are some similarities here between the UK and Germany where at GCSE levels all 16 year old students have to compile Portfolio of their career plans after their compulsory education. However, this will change in the UK because by 2015 compulsory education in the UK would be extended up to age 18. Currently, most school leavers in the UK leave with a personal portfolio of their achievements known as Record of Achievements and this portfolio includes all the career guidance training they may have had since year 9 (age 13/14).

The German Practical Phase could be compared to the UK's work experience programmes which, depending upon the state schools, is carried out between the ages of 14-16. During a two-week period all students are expected to have gone through some kind of work experience phase though it may be restricted to simple tasks such as office work, typing, reception, data entry, retail sales and general help within primary and nursery education. Such restrictions apply because of very strict Health and Safety regulations for some professions such as Medical & Hospitals and Construction sectors. In addition some employers may not be willing to take the risks, and costs associated with it, to engage young learners on their premises. Within the Independent sector, which is currently not regulated by the provisions of National Curriculum of the state sector schools, learners will have different opportunities and therefore, experiences of a career education. With the recent introduction of Diplomas in several subject areas, including Engineering, learners will have more chances of experiencing, and getting a feel of, different types of jobs as one-third of the Diploma requires practical experience while the other two-thirds focuses on theoretical aspects.

Although there is some similarity between Germany and UK within the Portfolio Phase (Record of Achievements in UK), the portfolio evidence gathered within the German system is an in-depth exercise truly focused on the career of an individual. There are eight different modules that cover career prospects and take the individual through a journey where there is an equal emphasis on gathering evidence, measuring one's competency, reflecting on career guidance and assessing one's strengths for future goals. Further there are six types of Portfolios from Working Portfolio, Presentation Portfolio to Topic-related Portfolio.



The Portfolio Phase truly allows a German learner to map their career path invoking elements of lifelong learning in the process.

When the Italian and UK presentations were done on Wednesday, again some similarities were noticed. In Italy, as in UK currently, aspects of career and the work place are introduced quite early at primary and nursery levels through concepts of work and other professions in games and role play during lessons. Italy also has the work experience programme similar to UK and unlike UK which does not have much of a manufacturing base; Italy's advantage, like Germany and Turkey, is that it also has a manufacturing industry. Learners could therefore, be trained or given work experience opportunities in many sectors, including the travel and tourism sector which is prominent where the Italian partner for the CORVET project is based. However, as in the UK, due to the current economic crisis since 2008, employers are reluctant to incur costs for such programmes and work experience seems to have fizzled out for that region. Additionally, to exacerbate the situation, unemployment in Italy has also risen as in the UK and again work experience programmes have been curtailed both by the employers and the education sector. Like many schools in UK which opt to train in-house and offer work experience as part of Work Skills units developed by many examinations boards, Italy also seems to be conducting more theoretical lessons rather than the practical experience.

Within the higher education sector, career orientation seems to be a lot more engaging and many universities in all partner countries taking advantage of Erasmus and other such LLPs supported by the European Union Culture and Education Department. As Globalisation has also increased, higher education providers are also becoming more enterprising and entrepreneurial in their approaches to career orientation. Majority form alliances and collaborations that allow their learners to experience other cultures while also engaging in work experience programmes on a global basis. Even newer universities such as the Ahi Evran University in Kireshir, which is just over a decade old, are looking constantly to raise their profiles via International programmes for their students. Costs, time and effort involved in such programmes mean that they are highly competitive and only the best and most vocal students are able to access such experience. In the UK, and in many parts of the EU, there are universities that have courses that specifically arrange global work experience on a number of their degree programmes such as Business Management.



After the Ahi Evran University visit we all went back to our hotel where the learners presented their views on career orientation in their countries and collectively answering four key questions:

1. What is careers orientation?
2. What are the pros of each country's system?
3. What are the cons?
4. What have we learned?

They all felt that while each partner country showed some good practices within the theme of the project, i.e. career orientation in vocational education and training there ought to be some form of uniform practice across the partnership. This would not only allow learners more access within the EU embracing diversity but also allow them to compete with Asia and USA when it comes to global career prospects.

The cultural night show put together by the learners once again showed the benefits of cooperative projects where cultural understanding and knowledge is enhanced giving reasons for more dialogue between countries and resolving common issues. This bonding exercise not only helps in the lifelong learning process but also enhances friendly competition between nations while enhancing individual opportunities. The UK team was also thrilled with the visits to, and the attention, they got from the Governor and Mayor of Kiresir. The hospitality showed by the Turkish partners, including officials was something the UK learners had never experienced before! With a cultural visit to Ankara, the capital of Turkey, the UK team also sampled some historic sites such as the Ataturk Mausoleum (Anitkabir), Anatolian Museum and Kocatepe Mosque. The team managed to bring back some souvenirs, including a Turkish Water Pipe (Turkish Nargile or Hookah or Sisha) and also enjoyed a specially organised lesson in Ebru Painting.

Success of any project or visit is generally assessed through evaluations and / or comments of the people engaged in such projects. In the case of the UK team this would be the learners. Here are just two reflections, the rest being incorporated in the Journal produced by one of the learners after the visit.

Christine Lawrence

I found the Turkey workshop very informative and, although we only had few days in which to complete it, I felt a lot was accomplished during our time there. As I had not previously attended the first workshop in Paderborn I was keen to find out more about



the aims and ideas of the project, and the efficient organisation of the various presentations and discussions made this very easy. Learning about the diverse education systems within Europe was also very interesting and the range of approaches regarding career orientation found in each individual country clearly highlighted the need for projects like CORVET. This necessity was emphasised during our visits to several education institutions and relevant authorities, which were encouraging and useful in illustrating the importance of our work in Turkey. It was great to see how applicable the project could be in the UK as well, as the facilities for career advice are available here but are rarely used due to the lack of emphasis on career orientation in schools. Turkish team were fantastic hosts and made us feel so welcome that I only hope we can provide the same level of hospitality at the next workshop in London.

Pao Sangsuwan

The project in Turkey exceeded my expectations. I had envisaged a dull non engaging workshop and long hours of tedious talks. However the workshops were extremely engaging and fun, the talks were interesting and thought provoking and extremely well done. The people involved in the project itself were very knowledgeable and friendly and this set a very friendly and informal atmosphere where all the participants could get to know each other and became not just comfortable in each other's presence but became friends. The only criticism for this project is that it was too short. Three days is a bit too short to cram and squeeze all the knowledge into. I had learned a lot in those three days however it would have been more productive to stretch the learning curve a bit so that a better understand could be formed. Also more was needed to be allocated for the "Learners" workshop as it was extremely beneficial having all the "Learners" in one room and working together. Overall the project was very enjoyable and very well organised and I have learned a lot from it.

