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## UK CORVET Report November 2012 London Workshop

### Reflections

The UK Team (Liane, Gabrielle, Christine and Rajesh) at European Learning network Ltd (ELN) had the pleasure of hosting the London Workshop III focusing on CORVET Survey Construction.

One of the German teams (Ingenious Knowledge) and the Italian team were the first ones to arrive on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2012. Ingenious Knowledge and European Learning Network kicked off the discussions on Sunday evening from 20.00 going into the late hours until 01.00. The discussions focused on the current progress of CORVET, its monitoring and evaluation processes and future projects such as Development of Innovation using the knowledge gained from the CORVET partnership. It was agreed that ELN and the German teams ought to pursue more projects and develop links with additional partners across the EU, not just for dissemination purposes but also to bring in other skills to the already strong team of Germany and UK.

On Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012, the UK team visited the venue (Idea Store, Whitechapel, London E1 1BU) early in the morning to set up the conference room. By midday, the conference room was ready for the delegates and Rajesh left for the hotel, Travelodge Aldgate East where the visitors were staying. At 12.00 sharp the German team arrived after having visited the more expensive, grander, sister hotel in the neighbourhood! As the budget and funding for the CORVET project is rather limited, the teams had to settle for the more secluded and budget Travelodge located in Chamber Street, Aldgate East, London E1 8BL. Apart from meeting the budget, this hotel was chosen as it was a 15 minutes walk to the venue which would give the delegates a morning exercise while imbibing the hustle and bustle of early morning activities in East London.

At 2pm the conference was officially started even though the Turkish delegates were delayed on route to London. This was because of the very tight schedule of the meeting where a lot had to be achieved in order to accomplish the objectives of the CORVET project. Rajesh welcomed the delegates to London and then Liane introduced the most important aspects of the conference, the health and safety procedures, who to contact during emergencies and what events were planned for the three day conference. Then Prof. Dr. Marc Beutner welcomed the delegates and formally opened the beginning of the London conference - The Survey Construction Workshop III.



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Later Rajesh Pathak went on to describe the current progress within the Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in UK. Since the first Paderborn meeting a number of changes had taken place among which the major one was the UK government's introduction of National Career Service that was officially launched from September 2012 as stipulated in the Education Act 2011. The three key players in the education sector in UK were mentioned and their roles highlighted i.e. the Department for Education, Local Authorities and Schools and Governing Bodies. Key drivers for the change were explained and the roles schools need to play in CEIAG in their institutions and how they manage career aspirations of their learners. While cost-cutting and austerity measures from the government has had its impact on career services across UK, there are pockets of excellent examples where career orientation is given emphasis and where the learners achieve their full potential.

There were some similarities with Italy where funding has become an issue and career orientation is affected at all levels including the delivery point. However, as in UK the Italian educators did their best to give the future generations as much as they could to keep their learners as competitive as possible in the global market place. One thing was apparent however, is that the Italian system does not have a distinct transition from place of study to place of work, at least not as the Apprenticeship schemes are run in the UK and to a greater extent in Germany where learners start Apprenticeships at a much earlier age and therefore develop skills necessary for the work place. It seemed that the psyche in Italy and to certain extent in UK had to be changed in order to benefit from a more acceptable career orientation in both countries. At least in UK as the recent satisfaction surveys (by City and Guilds, 2011) showed parents and learners were not totally satisfied with the way CEIAG was conducted in schools. Many young people reported that it was difficult to make informed choices about qualifications and university pathways and this was before the online NCS came into existence where much of the one-to-one advice would be lost.

In the afternoon of 30<sup>th</sup> October the Turkish team finally arrived having been delayed at airports and their long journey from Kirsehir, Turkey. The team was formally introduced to the rest of the delegates by both Marc and Rajesh. Later the delegates were treated to an evening of East London history with a guided walking tour by an acclaimed author and historian on East London, Ian Porter. Even though the typical London weather greeted us during the walk, the rain did not hamper the enthusiasm and interests of the delegates from Germany, Italy and Turkey. The evening ended with a great meal at one of the newer establishments in the City, Fish Market, Old Bengal Warehouse, 16 New Street, London EC2M 4TP.

On Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October, the Turkish team explained the major changes that are taking place since our last meeting in March 2012. In fact, the government has increased the compulsory school age. Five year old learners are now required to attend school. This sudden change, while possibly good for the future of the Turkish economy and learners themselves, is being implemented without enough resources and training of the existing teachers and providers of education across Turkey. In typical central government fashion, the authorities expect these to start immediately and there has been some chaos in the education sector as many parents felt age 5 was too early for their children



to start school and would do anything to avoid the early start by procuring medical certificates and emphasizing later schooling on medical grounds.

In Germany, the five-step career model leading to the development of the portfolio as part of a definite didactic approach is still strong. This is similar to the NAR (National Achievement Record) in UK that learners completed in their year 11 at age 16 over their five years at secondary school. This portfolio development involves the curriculum, education institution, learning environment and competence diagnostic leading to more individualized approach where learners develop a feel for their careers as they go along the schooling system. Unfortunately, this will no longer be required under the current scheme where the Connexion service has been scrapped across UK. However, as explained during the Conference some Local Authorities have joined forces (e.g. Central London Connexions, CLC, a group of nine London Authorities) have taken over these services previously funded by the central government and there are pockets of excellent practice in UK. Nonetheless, a recent survey by Association of Colleges (AoC, Nov 2011) found that 82% of school teachers in UK felt that they were not equipped to give career guidance to learners and 82% also felt that there ought to be better guidance for post-16 options.

The reason to choose Idea Store as the venue for the conference was highlighted by the Whitechapel Branch Manager, Asab Ali. The original library services have been transformed from lackluster visits of around 500,000 per annum to over 2,000,000 visits to Idea Stores since its inception some ten years ago. With visits from overseas countries as far as China and Korea to interests from EU member countries, Idea Stores acts as a One-Stop Learning Centre by supporting formal and informal learning to providing Adult Education and Community Club services to the population of Tower Hamlets. ELN and Idea Stores are looking at ways of increasing their learning concept by providing more focused learning and innovative solutions to careers post 16 leading towards a more fulfilled personal journey, including higher education pathways.

Visit to Barking and Dagenham College (BDC) showed areas of excellent practices going on in various parts of London and UK. BDC has many international partnerships with businesses, colleges and technical colleges across Germany, China (Guizhou, Beijing and other regions), Hungary, Italy and few others. With their newly opened Technical Skills Academy on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012, BDC will be engaged in helping NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) youth a better chance in life and aim to solve the unemployment and skills issues in Barking and Dagenham and surrounding regions of East London. Tues 31<sup>st</sup> October ended with a visit to the Westfield Centre, Stratford the delegates having earlier seen parts of East London developments, including the Olympic Village and Canary Wharf.

On the last day, Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012, the day was ended with a lively and informative debate about the survey questionnaire, learners' presentation of their discussions on a Common European Approach for Career Orientation and the forthcoming visit to Italy in March 2013. Prof. Dr. Marc Beutner also reminded the delegates of the need to file reports for the BSCW server and develop a publication strategy as we move towards the final leg of this very important project - CORVET.

