



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci
European Training for the UK

Leonardo Da Vinci



Euromentor

Executive Summary



Paul Garvey Consultancy Ltd, July 2007

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The Euromentor project was conceived as a successor to the highly acclaimed Peer Mentor Support (PMS) project and designed to take the work to a further stage of development and towards transition into training and employment.

The project was led by Trinity Fields School, Caerphilly, Wales and included partners from a range of organisations in Portugal, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Spain. The other Welsh partner, Gorseinon College, led the Me Myself I (MMI) Leonardo project whose work complemented that of Euromentor.

Euromentor was a 'transfer of innovation' project designed to take the peer mentor support methodology to new target groups identified by the partnership. The project's main purpose was to promote the social, educational and economic inclusion of young people from disadvantaged groups using a vocational training approach.

In the European Union there is a stark need for this activity. Over 16% of people have a long-term health problem and over 78% of these people are outside the labour market.

The aim of Euromentor was not just to develop the methods of the previous PMS project and extend its European dimension. It was also designed to promote new and innovative approaches in vocational training using peer mentoring support as a vehicle.

Euromentor worked with training providers and employers to offer training support to overcome their concerns about employing those from the target groups identified.

The project was very successful in meeting all its objectives and has had and will continue to have significant impact on future models and strategies, which will take the benefits of peer mentoring into new areas and situations.

The key aim was to optimise the impact and integration of the project methods into systems and practices across Europe. However, the Euromentor partnership had to tackle a number of barriers to progress during the two years of its development.

For example, the website took time to develop into a service that most benefited the project partners, while due to local prejudices with employers, the Czech partners found it very hard to penetrate the labour market for offenders leaving institutions.

Looking ahead, new challenges include the commercialisation and exploitation of the work. This is a wholly different exercise to the present project and will require a great deal of institutional support and careful business planning, market research, partnership building and the clear resolution of Intellectual Property Rights if it is to progress successfully.

Building links with employers in particular has arguably been the greatest challenge the project has faced. The employer group has traditionally been seen as the most difficult to persuade about the benefits of progressive schemes such as this.

However, the project partners in most cases demonstrated that employers, with the right level of induction and support, could be among the most enthusiastic of all the participants in the exercise. There is a strong business case for employers to work with people from marginalised groups with mentoring support, and these arguments need to be further disseminated and driven home if the project is to achieve its fullest impact.

Overall Euromentor has demonstrated many strengths. The partnership, half of whom were common to both this and the MMI project, was experienced, enthusiastic and committed. They have established a considerable reputation in Europe as a leading-edge team in the development of this work and are sought after as speakers and seminar leaders at education and policy meetings across the European Union.

The leadership, management and administration were all highly competent and ensured that all the key outputs were achieved.

The project took the work of peer mentoring into the widest possible range of cultures and target groups. For example, young people from a deaf school in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, described radical changes to their lives as a result of being in a mentoring relationship.

The project was strengthened by ensuring that each partner was the unambiguous leader of their section of the project and routinely provided progress reports to the whole partnership. This approach allowed the partnership to rotate the leadership and for everyone to feel a strong sense of ownership of the whole enterprise.

As with MMI, the partners were ambitious and aspirational in their approach, and these aspects, together with a shared energy and commitment, ensured the delivery of substantial outputs of a high quality.

The dissemination strategy was comprehensive and highly varied. Examples included the Human Resources Manager for the Welsh Assembly Government visiting a project-led employer forum in Trinity Fields School, while in Bulgaria AEFL carried the project logo on a racing car!

Other commendable features of the project included the highly successful employer forums and the demonstration of the transnational adaptability of the model being developed and tested.

This is a European project that thinks in a European way. It has created strong academic underpinning and has produced models and materials that will provide a unique service for beneficiaries for years to come.

There is both continuity and innovation evident in this partnership's work. It has enhanced the already strong reputation held by the participating institutions with education organisations, youth workers, employers and politicians.

The project partnership's determination was equalled by the value and importance of the work it carried out. Working together as a team, this determination and commitment has led to a very positive and successful outcome and an exciting future for the partners and the transnational prospects of this joint endeavour.

*The greatest good that you can do for another is not just to share your riches
but to reveal to him his own.*

Benjamin Disraeli

Paul Garvey Consultancy, September 2007

