

1. Presenting myself:

I am Paul Schram from Belgium. I work for the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training as project manager Entrepreneurship Education. I already hosted two visits on entrepreneurship during the period 2010-2011 and will organise three more visits on this topic in the future. I would like to share my experience in preparing and attending a study visit.

2. My 10-minute story about my experience of hosting a visit

In October 2010 I organised my first visit and I want to tell you more about the reason for this. I not only want to inform you about issues that went well but also about what I did differently the next time. Please feel free to interrupt me to ask questions.

- **Why?**

My two main reasons me to organise a study visit were:

- to share best practices from our country with interested people from other countries;
 - to find new partners for our future European projects about Entrepreneurship Education.
- For my organisation hosting a study visit is also a good PR opportunity.

- **Preparing the study visit**

1. The hotel

Try to find a hotel that is very close to the meeting rooms and that offers a reasonable price. Participants often want to go back to their room during breaks for various reasons.

We don't make any preliminary hotel reservations any more. We only advise a hotel and ask participants to immediately book their room online. We had some discussions about room rates. Sometimes sites like booking.com offer a small number of rooms at reduced prices during a short period. Sometimes travel agencies can offer interesting deals. Moreover, arrival dates and departure dates of participants are often not the same. Some participants want to arrive one or two days before the visit, others prefer to stay longer after the visit.

It is important that participants all stay in the same hotel. This is not only easy for organisational reasons but it also reinforces the team spirit.

2. Useful (travel) information

- By mail I send information about our country, airports and transfers to every participant, as soon as the participants list is confirmed by CEDEFOP.
- We ask every participant to fill in a registration form with his/her picture, day of arrival and departure, mobile phone, dietary requirements, other specific requirements (e.g. accessibility), expectations



3. Develop an interesting program

- The informal meeting the day before the start of the visit (late afternoon or early evening) is very important to break the ice and to get to know each other. I ask every participant to present himself and his organisation very briefly (no PPT presentations at the meeting; we ask the participants to make a short PPT and send it to me before the visit. Printouts of this PPT are distributed to all participants during the informal meeting). Then we explain the study visit program and the planning and arrangements. During a tasting of regional products (Belgian beers and typical snacks) I give some information about our country (world record for negotiations to form a new government after elections). After this informal meeting we suggest the group to dine together at a nearby restaurant.
- The daily program should not take too long. We always start around 9 AM, have lunch together from 12 to 13.30 h. and end around 16-16.30 h. We also hold breaks of 30 min. (Participants want to check their mails or want to call someone or even want to go back to their room). At the end of each day we offer 30 min. to work on the study visit group report.
- I don't organise any evening activity. Participants want to have some free time for visiting or shopping. Normally the group makes some arrangements for dining together. I give information about shopping areas, good restaurants, interesting places to see, ... It is up to every participant to decide what he/she wants to do during his/her free moments. This is very much appreciated.
- I also try to offer a varied program: presentations, an outdoor activity, at least one school visit, I invite teachers and their students for an informal chat with the participants.
I not only give presentations about my own projects, but I also invite people from other organisations who developed interesting materials and tools.
- I limit travel time to a strict minimum. If travel time is one hour or more (school visit), I offer a full day program at the visiting location.

- Suggestions

1. All lunches and local travel costs are paid by my organisation. Thus the costs for participants are limited (hotels in Brussels are not cheap 100-150 EUR night in ***).
2. I offer the participants the possibility to use our computers, printers, internet (checking mails, check-in for flights, print out boarding pass...).
3. Tourist information map: I prepare an information map with a plan of Brussels and information about museums and monuments. This map is handed over to the participants during the informal meeting.
4. For the informal meeting and for the first day of the visit I always pick up the group at the hotel reception, so I can show the right way to get to our offices.