EXPAIRS Project

Description

The EXPAIRS project in French-speaking Belgium aims to prevent early leaving by stimulating students, showing them that VET is interesting and by finding new strategies to motivate learners to stay in education and training.

Beneficiaries

VET students (school based)

1st VET year students (school based) which corresponds to the third year of secondary school and usually to 14/15 year olds, i.e. those who are usually the most at risk of dropping out.

Countries

Belgium-FR   Belgium

Education level and sector

Secondary education	Lower secondary education	Lower secondary vocational education and training (school-based)

Lower secondary education - first year of Vocational Education and Training - VET (third year of secondary education)

VET (school based)

Type of policy/initiative

Prevention   Intervention

Prevention/Intervention

Level of implementation / Scope

Regional level

Regional

Stage of implementation

On-going

Pilot concluded (2012-14) in 45 schools

Mainstreamed for the academic year 2014-15 via Circular 4816

Aims of policy/initiative

The main aim is to prevent early leaving by stimulating students, showing them that VET is interesting and by finding new strategies to motivate learners to stay in education and training.

Features and types of activities implemented

An academic team of experts on education at the University of Mons was in charge of the design and coordination of the pilot project 'EXPAIRS'.

Projects focused on at least one of the three clusters:

Motivation: finding items that stimulate the interest of young people in their school career, such as debate workshops.

Orientation: to work on the employment choice/orientation of the student

Organisation: to find ways to innovate the school's organisational model

Evaluation of the measure

The pilot phase was planned to be evaluated by the academic coordination team of experts as a requirement of the project itself, however various obstacles prevented its conclusion.

Success factors

The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed under the Cedefop study:

1. Acknowledgement from the Ministry that Early Leaving from Vocational Education and Training (ELVET) is an issue of concern: this is the first step enabling a project such as Expairs to be implemented.
2. Support from the Ministry of Education for developing experimental and alternative pedagogies and to adapt school timetables: support from the Ministry to enable schools to develop experimental projects/innovative pedagogies and adapt school timetables is essential. The fact that there are legal provisions for schools to develop such experiments is essential to guaranteeing the success of the project.
3. Support from the head of school: support from the head of the school where the project is taking place is crucial to legitimise the work of the pedagogical staff and guarantee its successful implementation.
4. Personal commitment of the project manager at school-level: for a project to be successful in a school, there must be a project manager who will gather all actors together and coordinate the different stages of its implementation. Interviewees observed that projects with a strong personal investment of its coordinator were more successful.
5. The Expairs project targeted all networks of schools: school projects usually stay confined within a specific school network. Expairs (and its successor Circular 4816) target all types of schools and address the issue of ELVET in an integrated manner. It also enabled the different school networks to share experiences on the issue of ELVET.

Contact details for further information

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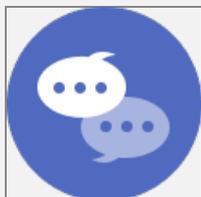+ 32 (0) 65 37 31 83
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