EDU4TEX 2.0

Educational Pathway to Attract Youngsters for Textile Careers

EU-Program: Erasmus+, KA2, Strategic Partnerships for School Education

Coordination: Huddersfield & District Textile Training Co Ltd (UK)

Duration: October 2017 – March 2020

Trend Report

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2 ABOUT THE PROJECT

The EDU4TEX 2.0 project is bringing together schools and businesses to develop a new approach to promoting the textile sector to teachers, careers advisors and young people. The project will enhance the curriculum by developing new learning content to illustrate the variety of activities and attractive careers in textile companies, providing new opportunities and developing new partnerships between the industry and education.

Early project activity includes research into students' aspirations and career preferences and the future skills needs of companies across the sector. Practical classroom sessions will be developed, supported by resources and teaching packs that link closely to the school curriculum. These will illustrate and demonstrate the wide range of science and technology based activities and occupations that exist across the sector. New relationships with companies will be created to facilitate reciprocal visits and company placements.

EDU4TEX 2.0 is delivered by a selection of European schools and industry organisations working together to develop and test new approaches to providing sector information to students using a wide range of media. Practical activities will be developed in partnership with textile companies. Teaching and learning packs will be created to ensure the information complements both the school curriculum and educational framework. These materials will be tested by schools in the four participating regions supported by a series of visits to companies and schools.

Our overall ambition is to improve the level of students' and teachers' knowledge of opportunities within the sector by providing new learning materials and organising practical activities both within and outside the classroom. This will serve to change perceptions about the modern textile industry, opening up new career options and providing new opportunities for young people.

3 PROJECT OUTCOMES

- 5000 potential users informed about the project (general public),
- 3000 end users (career advisors, teacher and students) reached via direct contact and dissemination actions,
- 100 career advisors informed about the project,
- 100 tutorials & professional kits distributed,
- 200 students engaged in the Career Events,
- 4 Awareness Sessions: Textile Days
- 75 attendances in the final seminar.

4 METHODOLOGY

Five partners developed and deployed a questionnaire to students comprising of 8 questions asking how students accessed information about careers, what they regarded as the most important factors when working and seeking employment, their preferred methods when applying for vacancies etc. The desired outcome was to identify similarities and differences between the educational settings across the partners' regions.

The five partners, BEST (Austria), Netherhall (UK), Isis Cipriano Facchinetti (Italy), IES Cotes Baixes (Spain) and Agrupamento de Escolas D. Sancho I (Portugal), disseminated their questionnaires

through various methods, including email and the online platform 'Survey Monkey' or completed the questionnaires during a number of focus groups. The age range of students surveyed was between 15 and 19 years old, but most groups were between 16-18 years of age. A number of the focus groups were introduced using videos **or debating sessions** that featured students who had previously studied at their school and representatives from the sector. The videos **and the sessions** were used to stimulate debate and provide valid examples.

The partners completed the following number of questionnaires:
BEST – 44 students
Netherhall – 45 students
Isis Cipriano Facchinetti – 40 students
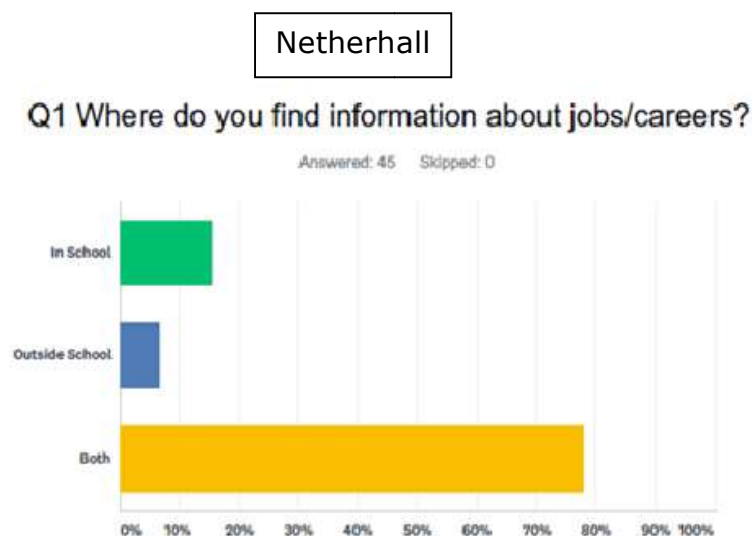IES Cotes Baixes – 17 students
Agrupamento de Escolas D. **S**ancho I – 48 students.

5   SURVEY FINDINGS

Due to the differing level of responses, schools' results have been analysed individually, along with percentage comparisons of results:

Question 1: "Where do you find information about jobs/careers?"
All 5 surveys indicated that the majority of students find information about careers and jobs both in school and outside school, and there was no significant difference between each country.

Netherhall

Q1 Where do you find information about jobs/careers?

Answered: 45   Skipped: 0

Netherhall reported marginally more find out information in school (16%) than outside of school (7%). This is similar findings to those at IES Cotes Baixes, where no students stated outside school, compared to 10% inside school.

All others who disseminated the survey collated more results favouring 'inside school, than outside.

Question 2: "In School, where from?"
Most students reported they find out their career information in school from their teachers or careers advisors. As shown, Isis Cipriano Facchinetti have an overwhelming difference between the options available where teachers are the most used source. IES Cotes Baixes show the same results with over 60% of their students sourcing information from teachers.

Isis Cipriano Facchinetti

Erasmus+
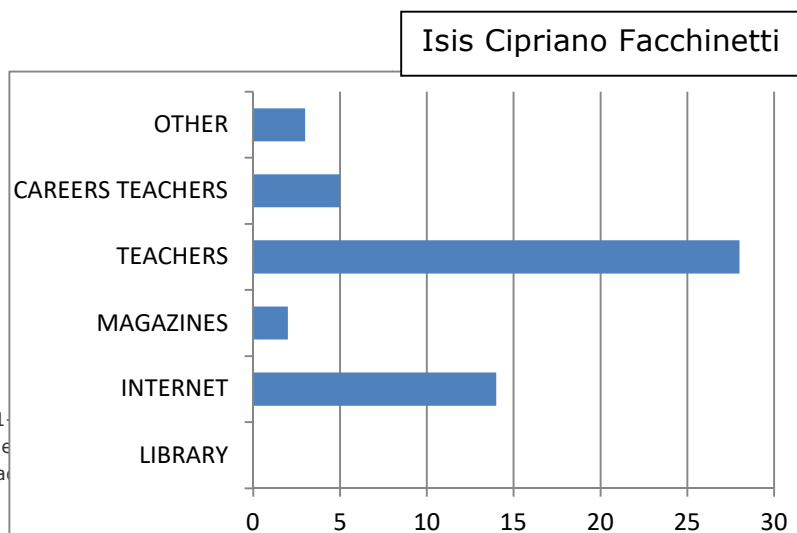
A number reported a high use of the internet, with Netherhall stating 19%, Agrupamento de Escolas D. Sancho I reporting 50% and BEST reporting 27%. Interestingly, in comparison, IES Cotes Baixes only reported 10% of their students use the internet. As predicted, all 5 responses indicated the school library was the area in which they received the least information.

Question 3: "Outside School, where from?"
All 5 regions reported similar findings, reporting their students primarily find out about careers and jobs using websites and job sites, unlike the practices in school. The next favoured option is from friends and families in all regions.
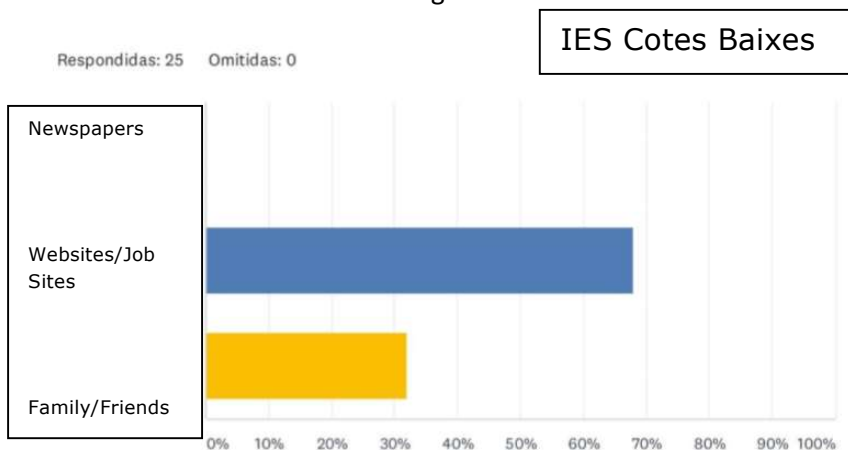

A small number of students stated 'Other'. Agrupamento de Escolas D. Sancho I reported 1 of their students chose this option, 5 students from BEST also chose this option, and 1 student from Isis Cipriano Facchinetti said 'other'.

Question 4: "How do you prefer to learn about career opportunities?"
Only three of the partners included this question in their survey, Netherhall, BEST and Agrupamento de Escolas D. Sancho I.

Similarly to the question 3, the preferred option for all three schools was using websites.
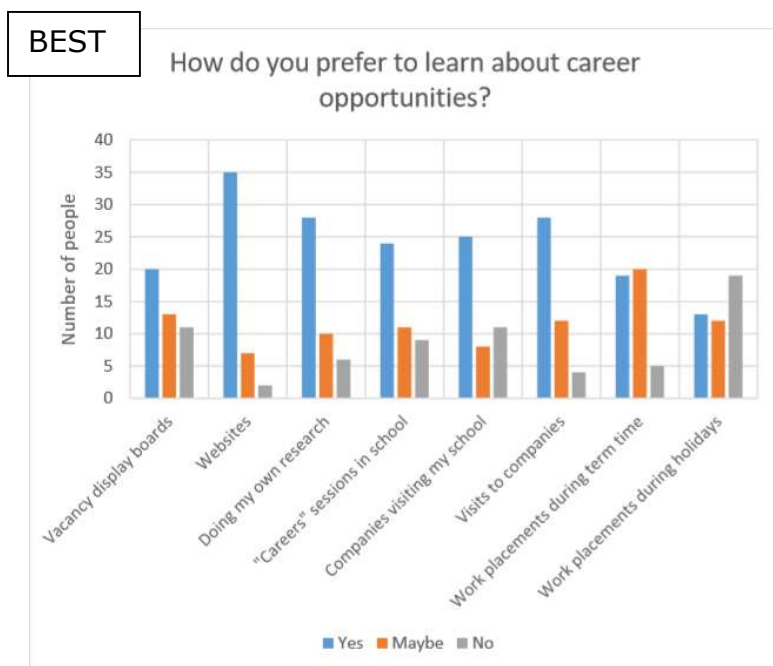
With regards to having companies visiting the school or the student visiting the company, both Netherhall (61%) and Agrupamento de Escolas D. Sancho I (75%) stated they would prefer companies visited the school. In contrast, BEST was the only partner to suggest those surveyed would prefer to visit the company (63%)
Each partner's research suggested students believe work placements during holidays are important, and would not be adverse to the idea, however, students would prefer to do their work placement during term time. When discussed with the students from Netherhall, they stated that this was due to being in the frame of mind to work which would be more productive.

Question 5: "What are the most important features of a job for you?"

Some interesting results: 75% of students in Austria, 98% of students in Portugal and the 90% of students in the UK reported they believe 'clean working conditions' were 'important' or 'very important'. This was the highest scoring feature of a job.

Netherhall

	NOT IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Close to home, easy to get to	14.29% 6	45.24% 19	26.19% 11	14.29% 6	42	2.40
Working with people my own age	45.24% 19	42.86% 18	7.14% 3	4.76% 2	42	1.71
Good salary	4.76% 2	23.81% 10	54.76% 23	16.67% 7	42	2.83

As shown above, the UK reported only 5% of their students thought working with people their own age is important, with 45% believing it was not important. In contrast, working with people their own age was one of the most important features to those in Spain. Austria's results were very mixed and didn't have a heavier weighted choice for this question.

Interestingly, BEST reported 68% of their students thought close to home and easy to get to was important. BEST suggest that traditionally, workers in Austria prefer to work closer to home, so it is clear that this is still something that is important with young people.

As predicted, a good salary is important for all students.

Question 6: "What are the most important things you want from a company?"

UK, Austria and Italy suggested that the most important thing they would like from a company would be 'a good boss'.
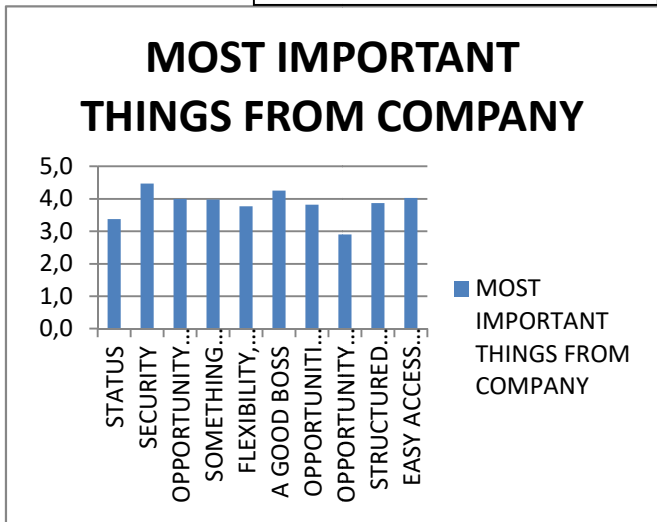
Netherhall

	NOT IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
A good boss	0.00% 0	4.76% 2	35.71% 15	59.52% 25	42	3.55

BEST
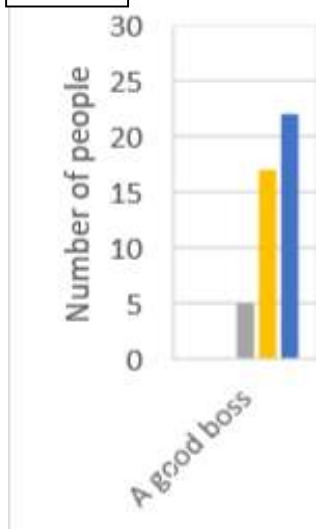
Isis Cipriano Facchinetti

The next highest scoring elements when looking at important things from a company was job security and opportunity to make some serious money. Unsurprising, as many young people will look for a high paying role but also want to know that they will have a long term position within the company.

As stated by IES Cotes Baixes, all of the aspects to choose from were important to them with only very small differences, but the opportunity to earn seemed to be the most important to them and would take precedent over others when deciding on what is important from an employer.

Question 7: "How would you prefer to find a company?"
The majority of students are not adverse using any of the options suggested, rejecting none, suggesting that at this stage they have an open mind when approaching the job market.

84% of students surveyed by BEST stated they prefer to look at a company's website to gauge what they might like in the company. The next preferred choice was to visit the company to look around, where 66% of students chose this option.

Isis Cipriano Facchinetti reported the majority of their students would prefer to talk to people who work there, and visit the company to look around. No one from Italy stated they wouldnt like to go and look around the company.

Portugal reported that 87% of students would prefer to speak to someone that works in the company. Here, visiting the company to look around is considered less important than looking at their website. Similarly, students in Spain and the UK expressed they would prefer to speak with people who work there rather than other ways of finding out about the company.

Question 8: "How would you prefer to apply for a job?"
Two clear preferences identified for applying for a job, those being filling out an application form and sending a CV. Italy showed a preference to filling in an application form with more than 75% of their students choosing this option. They stated that an application form was the best and easiest means to provide the company with as much information as possible. Similarly, Netherhall's student opted for this route, with a 74% preference.

Netherhall	YES	NO	MAYBE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Filling in an application form	73.81% 31	4.76% 2	21.43% 9	42	1.48

BEST showed a preference to sending a CV, 89% of their students chose this option. Agrupamento de Escolas D. **S**ancho I reported 83% of their students also prefer this option, and IES Cotes Baixes reported a greater preference for CV. It was noted by BEST that this preference is because it is more of a traditional means of applying for a job.

6   FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

In addition to the questionnaire, a number of students participated in focus groups to discuss their findings and stimulate debate further.

Italy did their focus group with all 40 students that participated in the questionnaire. Their students, aged 16-19 years, are required to carry out a certain amount of internship hours and is mandatory to all. Their experiences during these internships were discussed and it was established that a mixed response had been received. The majority of students were enthusiastic about it, and stated that they were able to do subjected that they were interested in and were paid to do the same. A few of the students were disappointed as they believed they were not being given the opportunity to train as the company manager feared they would break machines and tools. They also stated that the tasks they were given were simple and repetitive and didn't excite them. Some students stated their internship made them understand that they only way to reach good status within a company and the respect within a company was to go to university.

The UK had a group of 12 students who were randomly chosen to discuss in more details the findings of the survey. When looking at where students find out about career information in schools, they were asked if it was surprising to them that the students chose staff. The concerns raised here were that students could be missing out on opportunities if the staff were not aware of them. They also stated that it didn't surprised them that clean working conditions featured highly as an important aspect to a job, as stated that clean and good working conditions reflect on the employers and their investment in the company. The majority of students concluded that they would be willing to travel for a job if it was the right job and the right opportunity. They believed that having a good boss was extremely important as without a good boss, they wouldn't be given opportunities to develop and wouldn't enjoy it. Interestingly, contrary to their results from question 8, when discussed, students stated they would rather send a CV to an employer as its easier and quicker, however, if they were an employer, they would prefer an application form as it would allow the applicant to provide more detail.

Portugal arranged a focus group where they invited a former student of a vocational course related to the Textile Sector. She spoke about her experience and the students asked questions. It was clear from this that students were given further information about areas in which they could work in the sector that previously they hadn't known. They sought clarification on jobs that they were already familiar with, which increased their knowledge. Although some of the students had family and friends that worked in the sector, it was evident that they didn't particularly know much about what they did. Generally, the students showed a lot of interest in this topic, but mainly on the salaries available.

7   CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of the project it will be interesting to learn more about students' access to the internet and on-line materials. This will be important in order to determine how teaching materials can best be delivered.

Access to the internet at home would also be an important element as the project progresses.

The relationship between schools and company representatives will be an important aspect of the project. The Business survey clearly showed the limited amount of contact between companies and

schools and increasing that contact will be a critical part of the project's success. Comparisons between the effectiveness of school visits by employers and company visits by students should be made going forward.

Students' perceptions of what is most important when looking at a company as a potential employer should be shared widely within the sector as the project progresses. The importance of a clean working environment was very clear and should not be underestimated. The overwhelming importance of a 'Good Boss' should encourage companies to think carefully about who they choose to represent their business when dealing with young people, and the way they position their offer in an increasingly competitive, and selective market.