

Welcome to enjoy the 4th Newsletter of envolve-project!

This is the last newsletter of envolve-project. However, the work continues! **Stay updated by following our websites:**
www.luontoyrittaja.net/envolve.

New handbook launched

The envolve handbook is full of inspiring ideas which will help vocational training organisations to build strong links with small businesses. Included in the handbook are examples of different ways to co-operate and benefit students, teachers and businesses. This win: win approach for all parties has been tried and tested in small nature based enterprises (NBEs) in five European countries.

The handbook will be launched at the annual conference of the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET) in Malta on 26-28 October 2011. EfVET (www.efvet.org) has a network of 1500 VET organisations across Europe.

The handbook will also be available on the project website (see below for web address) in November 2011. We welcome your feedback.

Building a lasting co-operation

In the UK, Norton Radstock College has developed links with ten small businesses and a network of nature based enterprises. Entrepreneurs, students and teachers have worked together on a series of practical activities to help students gain valuable experience and provide innovative ideas for business development.

There have been other benefits such as course development in consultation with businesses. For example, the College has

worked with one of enterprises to develop and promote courses in orchard planning, pruning and harvesting.



Here are some of the views of different enterprises on the value of the co-operation:

“Envolve has helped to widen the focus for rural businesses” June MacFarlane, Orchard Ground Force, UK

“Small rural businesses are often isolated. I spend many months on my own on the farm. Now there is a way to talk, exchange ideas and look at relevant skills for young people and give them an opportunity to find out more about our sort of farming.” Judith Green, Somerset Lavender, UK.

“Working with Norton Radstock College on the Envolve Project has helped me to network, gain a European perspective, explore new business solutions and future apprenticeship possibilities, and it has been great fun!” Patrick Vincent, Green Mantle (Ecosophy) Ltd, UK

Over the two years since the envolve initiative started, more areas of the curriculum have become involved. For example, a painting and decorating student helped at Wellow Trekking Centre and gained valuable work experience. As Kelly says: *“I really enjoyed painting the horse arena at Wellow Trekking Centre. It was a really good experience. I met new people and it gave me*



a chance to put my painting skills into practice.”

Tutorial Support Assistant, Hilary Litchfield, added her perspective: *“For Kelly the opportunity to go to Wellow Trekking Centre and paint the Riding for the Disabled horse arena was excellent. She met new people, and had a chance to put into practice the skills she has been learning with us at college. Kelly gained valuable experience which will prove useful when she looks for employment in the future. The arena looked great when it had been finished and I am sure will be appreciated by the riders.”*

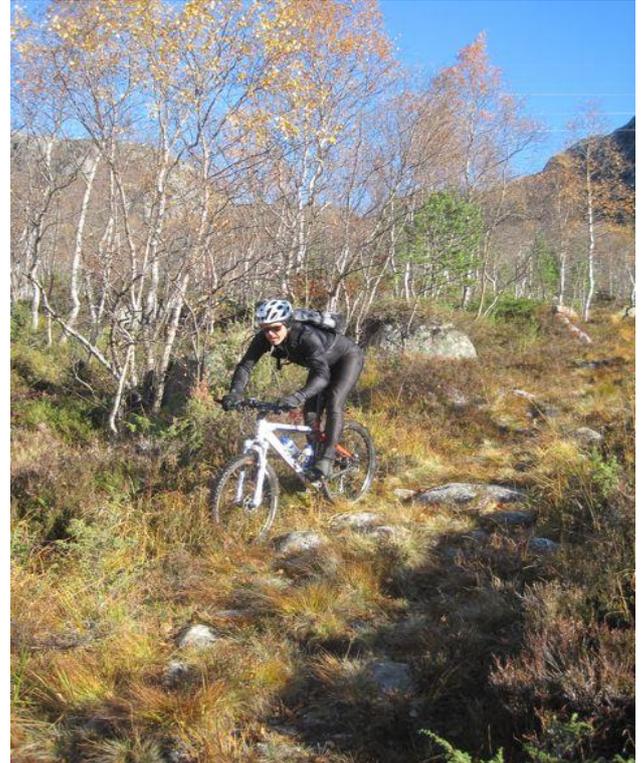


Building on the links already made with small businesses, the College is continuing to provide skills training and practical experience particularly for young people. In the words of Jen Hunter, from Fernhill Farm: *“It has been good to realise the potential of college students and provide a ‘start’ for a younger workforce.”*

Adventure tourism

In Norway, Rogaland School and Business Development foundation have set up a co-operation with new micro enterprises. One of them is Sunde Invest, where Geir Ståle Sunde arranges adventure bicycle trips in remote mountain areas for capable tourists,

in addition to boat/fishing and cottage rental by the fjords. The bicycle trips go to areas where nobody would believe someone brought their bicycle.

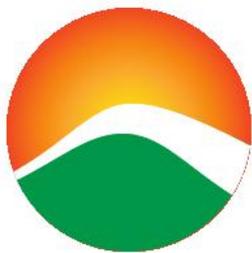


The VET school will produce marketing materials, set up web solutions and in return get him as an advisor and motivator for the students in how to set up your own business and find a niche in the market.



New prospect: Evaluation of quality in Ecotourism

The synergy that Euracademy Association has developed with the ECOLNET E.C co-funded project and the European Ecotourism Network is growing stronger. Through the activities of ECOLNET and with the support of the European Ecotourism Network a new employment prospect is emerging for nature based entrepreneurs involved in tourism, in qualifying to become evaluators of the European Ecotourism Labelling Standard-EETLS. With the finalisation of the development of the EETLS and the evaluators learning packages in early 2012, the ECOLNET partnership has agreed to contact interested ENVOLWE entrepreneurs to take up the training and with the support of the European Ecotourism Network to implement EETLS in their countries. For more information visit www.ecotourism-network.eu



European
Ecotourism
Network

Padding together to the future...

The Envolve – journey has been a real challenge in terms of co-operation and navigation in VET-SME open venue. After two years of commitment it is time to ask what have we really achieved? The truthful answer is: not what we originally tried to achieve, but much more and in a much wider perspective.

We started to paddle gently on calm waters with our four partners and there were hardly

any strokes to move the boat. Gradually we found some common interests and frames (recruitment and assessment) and the boat started to move. In few months we came closer in ideas and potential needs and gradually we started to understand the potential aspects of VET-SME co-operation and parallel planning.

At this level of co-operation we were still a little bit disorientated and lost in terms of direction. Entrepreneurs in Finnish nature based business are very variable in terms of products, networks and development needs, so there was still a big question over us:

IS THIS THE TYPE OF CO-OPERATION THAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR?



We had few harder “white water” periods and incidents that swung the boat causing some “leaking”. Finally through a failed recruitment event (planned and marketed together) and a fruitful benchmark tour we found our need to develop our actions (competence needs) and products (customer needs) in a parallel time and region and we really found ourselves in the same boat. At the same time we managed to find some tools for this work (see figure below) and links started to be created in various ways. The main question arose:



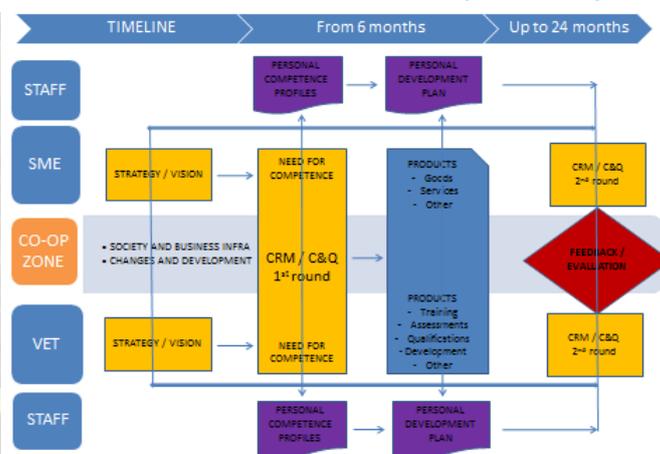
“How to create valid competence and knowhow, which would also support qualification development in parallel timing and a regional frame (North-Savo)?” After almost two years our paddling journey has now come to an end, but we have actually decided to proceed to an even more practical level. We wanted to create a new type of training and assessment practices based on our C&Q – model and new thinking of VET-SME co-operation. A new group of students started a training course in August this year and for part of this training, we have modified our tourism activities – studies to meet C&Q – needs.

Now we know that the rhythm of paddling should look and feel MORE LIKE THIS:

1. Update our strategies based on changes in our society and regional development (flexible approach)
2. Describe and update our competence profiles (VET and SMEs) to enable us to develop competences clearly and fast enough (flexible reaction)
3. Use C & Q – tool to document our parallel needs (staff profiles)
4. Use C & Q – tool to give feedback and evaluate our progress in two year intervals to our partners and vice versa.



COMPETENCE and QUALIFICATION – MODEL (YSAO / PILOT)



How can you get involved?

Through two years of piloting and parallel planning with our partners we have committed to:

By contacting one of the partners shown on the next page to find out more about our co-operation initiatives or by visiting our website below. We look forward to hearing from you!

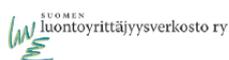


Project partners



Finland

University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute (Lead partner)
Contact: Anne Matilainen Email: anne.matilainen@helsinki.fi



The Finnish Nature-based Entrepreneurship Association
Contact: Juha Rutanen Email: juha.rutanen@helsinki.fi



Ylä-Savo Municipal Federation of Education
Contact: Kaj Jaaskelainen Email: kaj.jaaskelainen@ysao.fi



Europe wide

European Forum for Technical and Vocational Education and Training EfVET
Contact: Peter Hodgson Email: president@efvet.org



Euracademy Association
Contact: Vassilis Tshipidis Email: info-association@euracademy.org



Estonia

Eesti Maaülikool Estonian University of Life Sciences
Contact: Roger Evans or Lea Sudakova
Email: rgevansassociates@googlemail.com, lea.sudakova@emu.ee



Italy

Centro Studi Cultura Sviluppo (CSCS) Research Centre for Cultural Development
Contact: Stefano Tirati Email: stefano.tirati@gmail.com



Norway

Rogaland School and Business Development Foundation
Contact: Thomas Nilsen Email: thomas@nilsen.com



Norton
Radstock
College

United Kingdom

Norton Radstock College
Contact: Rosaleen Courtney
Email: rosaleen.courtney@nortcoll.ac.uk

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