WP2 - Best practices and Training Needs Assessment

Template for Best Practice Documentation (Case Study): SMEs in Apprenticeships with focus on role of intermediary organisations

Title	What is the name that best describes the good practice? Limassol Chamber of Commerce & Industry – Non - Governmental Organisation – Best Apprenticeship Practice
Publication date	When (month and year) was the good practice documented/published? 16th of November 2016
Source of Information	Who (What) is your source of information? Interview with the Manager and the Organisations Involved departments
Location (Region / Country)	What is the geographical range where the good practice has been used? Limassol, Cyprus

Context (appr. 500 words)	What is the context (initial situation) and challenge being addressed? Provide a short description.
	
	The organization is a non-governmental institution that as a business network acts in favour of promoting the economic development, the interest of business and industries. During last year, the organisation identified several needs and created an apprenticeship position based on the them to cover the following:
	
	• Need for a Secretary Assistant: The need of a secretary to act centrally in the organisation and organise tasks coming from and going to all departments as well as manage the communications system (telephones and emails). A job description was created in order to pinpoint all the activities of the apprentice which included among other tasks:
	    o word processing
	    o audio and copy typing
	    o letter writing
	    o dealing with telephone and email enquiries
	    o creating and maintaining filing systems
	    o scheduling and attending meetings, creating agendas and taking minutes - shorthand may be required
	    o keeping diaries and arranging appointments
	    o organising travel for staff
	    o using a variety of software packages, such as Microsoft Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, etc., to produce correspondence and documents and to maintain presentations, records, spreadsheets and databases
	    o devising and maintaining office systems, including data management and filing
	    o arranging travel, visas and accommodation and, occasionally, travelling with the manager to take notes or dictation at meetings or to provide general assistance during

	presentations ○ screening phone calls, enquiries and requests, and handling them when appropriate ○ meeting and greeting visitors at all levels of seniority ○ organising and maintaining diaries and making appointments; ○ dealing with incoming email, faxes and post, often corresponding on behalf of the manager ○ carrying out background research and presenting findings; ○ producing documents, briefing papers, reports and presentations ○ organising and attending meetings and ensuring the manager is well prepared for meetings ○ liaising with clients, suppliers and other staff • The need to manage incoming and outgoing bureaucracy due to increasing paperwork. • The need for support in the increasing number of projects that the organisation is currently and will be involved in the near future (EU funded projects and programs, All about Limassol project, the organisation's newsletter that has to be created and forwarded periodically) • The need for support in the organisation's marketing strategy and tasks and especially the creation of a database of the organisation's network. • The need for support during the increasing meetings and committees. • The need for support during event and official meeting planning. • The need for support to the day to day administrative tasks of the organisation. • The need for an all-around support to key persons of the Organisation.
Methodological Approach (appr. 500 words)	What methodology has been used in order to address the initial issue and lead to a successful outcome and finally to the good practice? What was the process? Who are the beneficiaries or the target group of the good practice? Who are the users of the good practice? The organisation created an apprenticeship position to cover the needs and challenges listed before. It tried to fill the position focused on training and mentoring. The steps are analysed below: • The organisation identified the need for recruitment of a new employee that would support the new challenges of the organisation and cover needs that would make it able to provide higher quality services. • The organisation identified the position that was going to be created and filled and developed a job description. • The organisation has been preparing and training a person for the position during the whole year that passed. The new person/apprentice followed the steps of training first filling an internship position for 6 months and then an apprenticeship position with a probation period of 4 months. • During internship, the person who would become the apprentice,

	offered support to almost all day to day tasks. This way the intern received on-the-job training and learned to work at the pace of the organisation.
	• When the internship period was completed, the new person passed through an apprenticeship phase of employment and training. The organisation developed a training strategy and recorded the overall progress in order for the apprentice to learn in-depth and use daily the defined operation procedures.
	• The training plan contained on-the-job and off-the-job mentoring and training. All of the support tasks and activities of the organisation were covered during the internship period. During the apprenticeship period the apprentice was assigned responsibilities based on the organisation's departments and procedures that correspond to them. Also, the training plan contained vital of-the-job training that the apprentice would attend in order to build the capacity to cover the position created and acquire the skills needed to support all the necessary activities and tasks.
	• A key factor for the training of the apprentice was the rotation in all of the organisation's departments in order to cover the challenge for the overall support to all personnel.
	• Training that took place in the organisation was the study of the vital job description information and the organisation's operation manual.
	• The apprentice attended several seminars and workshops that helped acquire skills, information and build the capacity to take initiative in required tasks of the organisation.
	• A training, mentoring and probation period of 4 months was given to the apprentice to prove that was ready to undertake the increasing responsibilities of the newly created position.
	The beneficiaries of the overall situation of this apprenticeship program were of course the mentoring organisation and the apprentice.
	The mentoring organisation managed to cover the needs and tackle the challenges successfully with just an apprenticeship position without having to hire a new employee with extensive experience and higher salary requirements. The organisation spotted the benefit of an apprentice because almost any new job position requires training and off-the-job activities.
	The apprentice, a young person who started as an intern and after given the opportunity to take on more responsibilities, proved to be the right person to fulfil the job description and benefitted immensely. The apprentice was offered a work contract in the increasing difficulties of the job market at present time.
Impact and key success factors (appr. 500 words)	What are the lessons learned and the key success factors identified? What has been the impact compared to the initial situation / challenge addressed?
	A major success factor was the steps that were taken, from the beginning of the training until the apprentice became an employee. Especially the transitional period between the end of internship and beginning-middle of

apprenticeship were considered very important as the apprentice began the main part of the training that included new and more important responsibilities. Moreover, the apprentice was moved from a general support position to a specific job position-description with special objectives.

The key success factors identified are:

- The organisation identified the need for recruitment and created a job description based on the need specifying the role of the new member to be trained.
- The organisation took on an internship early on, to cover the increasing challenges and needs of the different departments before those challenges become difficult to handle by the existing personnel.
- The organisation created an apprenticeship position and started to train the intern. A training strategy was developed and the apprentice, in a probation period of 4 months, had the obligation and opportunity to participate in different on-the-job and off-the-job training schemes.
- The apprentice received training rotating positions in all departments in order to gain the insight to support them all in the future. So, the organisation can be considered a mentor as a whole and every member of the staff individually.
- The organisation did not underestimate the fact that the apprentice was young of age and gave him plenty of responsibilities and opportunities to prove the skills and use the training acquired day by day. The supervisors trusted the apprentice's judgement in many topics and tasks.

The apprentice, who now has passed the probation period, offers the newly acquired skills to the organisation's needs and the increasing tasks are handled successfully. The position of the Secretary Assistant is being successfully filled by the apprentice. Many of the challenges described in the opened apprenticeship-job position are handled by the apprentice without any problems. The organisation is very satisfied by the apprentices/new employee's performance.

Stakeholders and Partners (appr. 500 words)	Who are the institutions, partners, intermediary organisations involved in the good practice, and what is the nature of their involvement? Explain the different roles and benefits from the good practice! In the good practice, the following organisations were involved: - The mentoring organisation which opened the apprenticeship position and provided the training to the apprentice. The training started as an internship and continued as a purposeful training of an apprentice. The organisation created a job description and a training strategy which the apprentice followed for the defined probation period. - Several institutions which provided off-the-job training, organising seminars and workshops which the apprentice attended. These institutions include companies, consulting organisations and training

institutions like the Universities, Business Associations and Consulting Groups. The apprentice also attended the annual general meeting of the organisation.

During these seminars and workshops the apprentice built the capacity for the following skills:
- o word processing
- o letter writing
- o using a variety of software packages, such as Microsoft Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, etc., to produce correspondence and documents and to maintain presentations, records, spreadsheets and databases
- o devising and maintaining office systems, including data management and filing
- o dealing with incoming email, faxes and post, often corresponding on behalf of the manager
- o producing documents, briefing papers, reports and presentations
- o website development and maintenance
- o content marketing
- o new funding tools on Research and Development

- Another organisation who played a key role in the best practice apprenticeship program was the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus which provided funding to the mentoring organisation for hiring the apprentice. The Authority also provides funding for several seminars and workshops that the apprentice has to attend as a requirement for the funding program. Of course the topics of the trainings-seminars are revolved around the topic of the job position and job description that the apprentice corresponds to.

Conditions (appr. 500 words)	What are the conditions (institutional, economic) that need to be in place for the good practice to be successfully replicated? Please mention funding and subsidies that were provided!
	The conditions that need to be in place for the good practice to be successfully replicated are:
	- A need has to be identified and a job/apprenticeship position has to be created according to a Job Description. - The interested mentoring organisation has to show willingness and patience and make the decision to train an apprentice instead of hiring an employee. - The interested mentoring organisation has to search and identify funding tools for the apprenticeship program that wants to set into motion. - Several seminar and workshop organising institutions have to be identified, in order to provide the apprentice with training options. - The mentoring organisation has to identify several training schemes on the topic that the apprentice will be active.
	The funding provided comes from a funding program of the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus.

Materials / Tools	What materials and tools were developed? • Job Description • Training documents and records. • Audio-visual presentations. • Updated Website • Better phone management system • Better support for departments • Updated and higher quality paper work
Replicability and/or up-scaling (appr. 500 words)	What are the possibilities of extending the good practice more widely? If the key success factors are considered seriously and guidelines are developed based on them, there will be a great possibility to replicate and extend the best practise more widely. The most important factors are: • The internship period the person has to pass before becoming an apprentice and which will provide most of the on-the-job training. • The apprenticeship period which will provide both on-the-job and off-the-job training according to specific job position-description. • The identification of training seminars, workshops, courses and tools in order to create a training strategy. • The identification of funding tools in order to enrol the apprenticeship programs for funding. We can deduce from the above, that in order to replicate and extend the good practice, preliminary work has to be performed based on the following: • First and most important is the identification of funding programs which can help the future mentoring organisations fund the whole or part of the apprenticeship process. • Secondly, the organisations have to open an internship position which they have to fill after examining possible candidates. • Thirdly, the organisation has to prepare a job description and create a job position in order to move the intern to an apprenticeship position and train him/her according to a training plan/strategy that the organisation has to have in hands.
Conclusion (appr. 500 words)	Conclude specifying/explaining the impact and usefulness of the good practice. The organisation identified the need for a new employee and decided to train an apprentice for the position. The strategy followed included clear methodologies, training plans and documentations and identifying funding

	opportunities to help with the apprenticeship program.
	The good practice had a massive impact on the organisation's activities and departments. It offered a solution to many challenges that the organisation had to face due to the increasing number of projects, responsibilities and tasks. During the apprenticeship period, the apprentice was already familiar with the organisation's activities due to the previous internship period. This means that the apprentice didn't need to pass through extensive orientation and extensive day to day training, something that is time and resource consuming. The personnel of the organisation supervised the whole program and the apprentice's progress without losing additional time.
Other remarks:	