

## Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business

### Summary

Inappropriate cross-cultural behaviour in business often leads to costly misjudgements. Preventive measures should therefore already be taken as part of vocational training/ pre-vocational general education. For this reason, the project is focussing European vocational propaedeutics on positive preconditions for successful cross-border business relations and co-operation. It will set up a European competence network "Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business Education and Training" (c-cbb) with high multiplication in order to:

- .. improve the quality of vocational training in Europe by reflection and effective dissemination of the approach to training,
- .. make the school and specialist sector across Europe more sensitive to the issue, also by making use of dynamic, interactive Internet and communication technology and by taking into account foreign language acquisition and life-long learning,
- .. link economic learning to the promotion of equal opportunities on the European labour market and break down xenophobic feelings of resentment.

A conference will promote the international exchange of experiences regarding training concepts regarding "c-cbb". It will publicise training approaches which are applied successfully in European vocational training. It will conduct online further training for teachers at a European level, compile a publication for the conference and also develop a curriculum (project homepage: <http://www.c-cbb.de>).

The project addresses instructors at universities and in further training for teachers, multipliers in the education sector, teachers at secondary schools and vocational schools as well as – indirectly- their students. Professionalism of SMEs and vocational training institutions as well as that of their employees will be improved due to the dissemination of an "open" curriculum model with sustained effectiveness, which in the medium term can be implemented in various national systems for vocational training.

### Background of the project

Economic globalisation and in particular the extension of the EU to the East is making business relations within Europe and Europe's role on the world market more dynamic. The extended EU single market and stronger commitment of European companies on markets outside Europe require employees to be more mobile, change behavioural patterns and apply other forms of communication, in order to, on the one hand, compete successfully for jobs on the European labour market, and, on the other hand, to be able to take cross-border and co-operative action in multicultural contexts in their job. In view of markets, competition and organisations world-wide becoming more and more integrated, entrepreneurs, employees and consumers must also increasingly communicate, negotiate, co-operate and reach compromises with people from other cultural backgrounds. Working together with people from other cultural backgrounds, whose values and views, language and behaviour differ from one's own, in business often leads to costly misjudgements and errors. Measures to prevent these problems should already be taken in vocational training and pre-vocational general education. For this reason, European vocational propaedeutics must focus on positive preconditions for successful cross-border business relations and co-operation.

### Objectives

Across Europe, the project reflects and disseminates cross-cultural contents, practices and methods for promoting cross-cultural behavioural competence and European co-operation (of teachers and instructors, students and trainees) in the vocational training sector. It initiates systematic and in-depth training co-operation projects within the EU between SMEs, vocational schools and further training for teachers with regard to the conveyance of cross-cultural knowledge and behavioural changes by setting up a **European competence network** "Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business Education and Training" (c-cbb), the objectives of which are:

- .. to increase professionalism of training institutions and that of their employees by Europe-wide dissemination of a curriculum for "c-cbb" with sustained effectiveness, which reacts in a flexible and appropriate manner to the needs and resources of young people in vocational training, and which sets up a network between the people involved in teacher training, further training for teachers and vocational schools.
- .. To make the Europe-wide school and specialist sector more sensitive to the necessity and significance of "c-cbb" in Europe-oriented vocational education by staging a European conference and making using of dynamic, interactive Internet and communication technology for developing a European competence network "c-cbb"
- .. To initiate a broad and in-depth debate in university education, further training for teachers and vocational

education regarding the necessity and significance of a curriculum “Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business Education and Training”, also taking account of language learning, and making use of modern information and communication technologies and methods of life-long learning.

- “ To promote and improve the quality of international exchange projects, for the systematic transfer of experiences with regard to exchange processes as well as to promote foreign-oriented courses of education and purposeful utilisation of EU and other aid instruments, which promote an active role of teachers and students in a Europe which is growing together.

### **Pedagogic and didactic approaches and concepts**

C-CBB promotes

- “ bilingual offers and improved foreign language learning in vocational education,
- “ the integration of a European dimension into the curriculum of subjects taught,
- “ approaches which arouse young learners’ interest in the European dimension, enable cross-border, co-operative learning within Europe and develop cross-cultural competence further, and
- “ utilisation of all programs and possibilities for cross-border and life-long learning as well as that of modern information and communication technology for formal and informal learning.

### **Target groups**

The project directly addresses: Staff in teacher training at universities and further training for teachers, school inspection authorities, multipliers who have a co-ordinating function, teachers at secondary and vocational schools as well as – indirectly- their students throughout Europe.

### **Results of the project**

- “ a dynamic homepage (German, English)
  - a) to advertise the conference, handle some of the conference logistics and document preparations, implementation and follow-up work as well as document and disseminate the overall results of the project,
  - b) to publicise “Models of good practice” (German, English)
  - c) to install a forum for debate, where twice, over a period of 14 days, an online debate with a moderator will take place, for teachers from European business schools to discuss topics concerning C-CBB for purposes of curriculum development (in the sense of experience-oriented, discursive further training for teachers),
  - d) to install an interactive online marketplace, a database of schools and learning groups in Europe with an interest in the topic and in particular in finding partner schools with comparable target groups and performance level in order to form a co-operation with regard to C-CBB.
- “ a marketing brochure on the conference (German, English), which will include information on the intentions, objectives, target groups, methods as well as organisational details of the conference and which will be sent out to regional, national and European partner networks (within the framework of Euregio, Connect, Leonardo, Socrates, Forum Education etc.) as well as the specialist and regional press. Furthermore, the conference will be publicised in specialist magazines and on education servers.
- “ a curriculum “Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business” (English), developed at a European level, which will include topics and measures to be addressed by the subject “European Studies”. It is open to integrate current events and, if required, it should also be possible to integrate it into the syllabus at short notice.
- “ a conference reader (approx. 100 pages, English) with a print run of approx. 250 copies, which will document the results of the conference and be sent to the participants of the conference as well as to multipliers and decision-makers in the vocational education sector.

### **The conference**

The conference will take place in Aachen/Germany from 28 August to 1 September 2002. It will be organised by VLW (Association of teachers at business schools)/Germany in co-operation with the ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN ECONOMICS EDUCATION – AEEE, the European umbrella organisation for teachers’ associations in the field of economics and business studies and commercial training, and AEEE Germany. The AEEE has national associations in nearly every European partner country. The topic of the conference will be “Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business Education and Training”. All details regarding the conference can also be accessed via the web site <http://www.c-cbb.de>. The conference provides an opportunity for European teachers and experts from the sectors of schools, small and medium-sized enterprises, further training for teachers as well as from training institutions for vocational education to enter into dialogue with one another. The conference will enable a European overview over “models of good practice” and reflected experiences to do with the proposed topics: Experts and multipliers are offered a forum for comparing experiments which

have already been carried out or are currently being put to practice, in order to discuss necessary measures for enabling successful integration of “c-cbb” into the education mainstream of the member states, to outline ways to set up networked co-operation for education experiments at a European level. The theoretical and didactic work serves to support and develop the European single market. This has an effect on the very core of the correlation between education and training, personality development and economic interests in a Europe which is growing together. Essentially, the conference has three **objectives**:

- “ To provide a detailed overview over the diverse concepts and forms of conveying “c-cbb”
- “ To publicise and make transparent important examples for educational approaches and training measures for “Cross-cultural Behaviour”, which are being successfully applied in vocational education of European member states, by regional corporations or companies, educational institutions and vocational schools.
- “ To promote the international exchange of experiences within a thematic network infrastructure.

The conference will include plenary events, workshops and “poster sessions” for specific topics. We propose the following three topic areas:

**1. Migration as a Factor of European Social Economy.** The majority of European states at present has an exceedingly heterogeneous population structure as far as socio-economics are concerned. The consequences of diverse migration movements not only lead to changes in social everyday life, but also in the economies which are losing or gaining people. The integration of European societies which is progressing in this manner as far as the mobility of the population and the workforce is concerned will be analysed and evaluated by the European partner organisations participating in this measure.

**2. Cultural Identity and the Diversity of Business Success.** Europeanization and globalisation are placing new demands on addressee-orientated behaviour in business. This applies to both the production and marketing sectors. The European market in its extraordinary complexity and national and regional diversity represents a particular challenge for companies. A concentration of economic forces in Europe is only possible if the diversity of circumstances in the member states is taken into consideration. Analysis and discussion will address the intersections as well as the contrasts, in order to find answers to the question of how to be successful on the European single market.

**3. Teaching Approaches.** Cross-cultural relations have long evolved from being limited to cultural affairs, and play a decisive role in particular in the business environment. Export-oriented companies offer their employees further training courses which go far beyond foreign language lessons and deal with behavioural topics ( “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.”). In view of the fact that students and trainees are taught in multinational groups, we want to identify approaches which can convey knowledge in an objective manner and, at the same time, make it possible to experience and profit from the learners’ differing perspectives.

Particular emphasis must be placed on transversal aspects which can be incorporated into concrete activities, e.g. linking the use of information and communication technologies and multimedia as well as strategies of life-long learning for acquiring cross-cultural competence, support for socially disadvantaged target groups and “gender mainstreaming” in preparing, carrying out and following up c-cbb activities and also breaking down racist feelings of resentment and taking into consideration the cultural resources and heterogeneity of the target groups’ cultural identities.

Speakers will include: Prof. Dr. Coppieters, University of Antwerp, Prof. Dr. Hans Jürgen Schlösser, University of Siegen; Prof. Dr. Konstantinos Velentzas. Further leading authorities from European universities and schools have been invited.

Target groups of the conference are instructors and teachers at vocational schools and economic and pedagogic faculties of teacher training, teachers and researchers as well as co-ordinators in the school, business and other educational institutions sectors.

All material and lectures should reflect and emphasise aspects of the topic which are relevant for Europe. Presentations should provide suggestions for learning and teaching economics and business science as well as commercial training at schools and universities. The presentations should be supported by written summaries. **Manuscripts** should reach the following address by 15 April 2002: Dipl.-Handelslehrer Ernst Bizer; Geschäftsführer des VLW; Klever Str. 35; D-40477 Düsseldorf; Germany, Telephone: + 49 / 211 / 4910208; Fax: + 49 / 211 / 4983418; E-mail: [info@vlw-nrw.de](mailto:info@vlw-nrw.de).

## Evaluation

The evaluation of the project will be based on Stufflebeam’s **CIPP concept** and his motto “The most important purpose of program evaluation is not to prove but to improve” (Stufflebeam, D.L.: The CIPP-Model

for Program Evaluation, Dordrecht 1984). The categories of his concept are context, input, process and product. In these categories, the projects involved are described at the levels of practice, technicality, administration and policy.

The description of the **context** in particular refers to

- the educational context of the project
- the institutional framework of the project (institutional allocation, sponsorship, reference to the regulatory structures of general and vocational education and to the employment system)
- the legal terms of reference (regulations on tasks, standards, conditions for sponsorship)
- description of the target groups,
- the range of possibilities for implementation, possible alternatives, difficulties and problems,
- how the project relates to the specific subject matter

The description of the **input** refers to

- decisions on which the project is based (political, administrative support, resistance)
- identifying and assessing the possibilities for action within the framework of the project and possibilities with regard to access to the resources
- to show up possible alternatives as well as the concrete strategies for implementation which have been selected
- to evaluate whether the targets to be attained are an appropriate response to the need which has been identified,
- presentation of the available means and their utilisation as well as the
- time available (duration of the measure and its components),

The description of the **process** refers to

- project planning and its implementation,
- reasons for possible reviews of planning decisions and the decision processes these are based on,
- documentation of the concrete course of the project
- action referring to this as well as
- important project events.
- prospects for the effectiveness of the project

The description of the **product** refers to

- criteria for success; efficiency and effectiveness of the project as regards the objectives as well as side effects which have occurred
- evaluation of the results both by the target groups involved and by clients and those who are responsible for the policies,
- effects on the chances for practicability and effectiveness of the results
- effects on people's life plans and prospects for the future as well as young people's capability to deal with day-to-day problems,
- assessment of the transferability of results, taking into account the structure of preconditions

## **Dissemination**

The high complexity of the partner network ensures a particularly large multiplication effect. In their day-to-day practice, all partners work in national and European informal networks, which they use for effective dissemination of the “Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business Education and Training” concept. The overall character of the project is designed to multiply, publicise and support at a national and European level the dissemination and adaptation of educational approaches in the field of cross-cultural, job-oriented experiences, which have been developed, documented and made comprehensible by media within the framework of the partners’ experiences.

Summary of dissemination activities:

- “ Dissemination via local networks of the partners, (transfer to national, regional or local education systems is aimed for;)
- “ Analysis of the individual national education market, in relation to a curriculum “Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business Education and Training”
- “ Staging a European symposium “Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business Education and Training”
- “ Further training in the direction of educational institutions not participating in the project
- “ Setting up an online marketplace for teachers in the Internet, where teachers can obtain information and communicate with one another
- “ Specialist publications
- “ National multiplication by means of seminars, further training for teachers and university events

### **Composition and contribution of the partnership**

The project partnership is supported by the “Association of European Economics Education” (AEEE). AEEE is a European umbrella organisation, which links national associations in the interest of improving economic and commercial education and vocational training. AEEE has members in many European countries. AEEE enables its members to exchange experiences made in instruction and teaching and also to get to know innovative, Europe-oriented educational approaches in the field of economics and business studies as well as commercial training.

### **Equal opportunities for men and women**

- Breaking down gender-specific allocation of roles within the framework of occupational orientation by increasing female learners’ self-confidence, belief in their own strengths, self-assertion and competence
- Conveyance of orientation concepts which take account of both men and women’s occupational as well as personal and family-related plans for life
- Raising the matter of equal status of men and women, ethnic and German young people in further training courses for teachers
- Introducing all learners to self-learning media and active design of new media.

### **Equal opportunities for disabled people**

- In order to be able to achieve successful learning, disabled students depend on there being in place concepts, structural standards as well as in particular infrastructure-related conditions and supporting measures, which enable cross-cultural activities and learning without obstacles and barriers.
- Disabled learners require advice services tailor-made to meet their needs, as they need constant and continuous support with regard to all areas of their studies and their lives in general.
- Learners have a right to participate fully in all forms of cross-cultural experience.

### **Fighting racism and xenophobia**

- In view of cultural misunderstandings and communication problems, language difficulties, lack of internationality, integration difficulties of ethnic minorities, xenophobia and racism as well as integration problems the people involved in vocational education have to be very committed.
- A forward-looking, effective European education system will therefore be based on the model of a European consciousness which actively supports a society of European citizens.
- Exchange programmes, stays abroad, multilingualism and simplified mobility prevent exclusion, increase

tolerance for other cultures and create awareness for a European culture, encourage life-long, informal learning and therefore increase chances on the single employment market.

- Education and vocational education in a Europe of the regions must raise the issue of regional specialities and peculiarities.

### **Needs of other disadvantaged people**

- C-CBB also supports socially disadvantaged young people. The regional work of institutions is based on the need for supporting the target groups identified in accordance with national criteria.
- Their discrimination results from e.g. poor general educational background or low achievement potential, insufficient knowledge of their native language (also applies to certain groups of foreign youngsters) and mathematics, poor training motivation, low self confidence and sense of achievement, social/family problems, often in combination with general socialisation deficits, health-related restrictions often also in the form of non-serious disabilities.
- New means of access to new learning experiences for disadvantaged target groups can be opened up by developing a course concept which places emphasis on the personality-forming element and is open, constructivist, action-oriented and learner-centred.

### **Innovative aspects of the project**

The project represents an innovative contribution to improving the professionalism of SMEs, education institutions and that of their employees by Europe-wide dissemination of a curriculum "c-cbb" with sustained effectiveness. As the concepts disseminated in the project can be transferred to all types of vocational education offers, implementation in various national vocational education systems is aimed for in the medium term. It makes a European contribution to national vocational education policies and increases their attractiveness. Furthermore, the project enriches the educational structures by means of a co-operative culture of European partnerships, which makes use of the communicative and co-operative potential of information and communication technologies and the resulting scope for action, experience and manoeuvre for organising differentiated and individualising European learning processes. Teachers become more professional with regard to how they teach "cross-cultural skills".

The important educational interests of the Federal Republic of Germany and each of the individual European national states in this sector are – with regard to the evaluating analysis and discussion -concordant with the perspectives of the other European member states.

**6. Synopsis of Activities**

Project: C-CBB					
<b>Project phase</b>	<b>Results: At the end of this phase the following will have been achieved/compiled</b>	<b>Activities leading to this result</b>	<b>Planned dates for beginning and end of activities</b>	<b>Partners/people involved</b>	<b>Time required (person-days)</b>
1 Implementation of the project	1. Binding agreement has been reached re. work packages and responsibilities of partners as well evaluation criteria 2. Homepage is available in the Internet 3. Conference brochure has been compiled 4. Communication and co-ordination of the partners via Internet (e-mail, Internet forums)	1. Steering meeting: target-oriented project planning: formation of teams for specific tasks and putting work packages into specific terms/ review of work packages; clarification/review of objectives, procedures and results/effects of the project 2. Compiling a dynamic web site (online forum, homepage) 3. Compiling a conference brochure 4. Setting up a communication infrastructure for partners via the Internet (e-mail, Internet forums)	1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> month	1. all 2. vlv (Association of teachers at business schools) 3. vlv 4. all	1. 10 2. 4 3. 2 4. 1,5
2 Development and testing of the curriculum	5. Material on C-CBB has been collected and publicised in the Internet 6. Online discussion in the Internet 7. Curriculum "c-cbb" 8. Tested curriculum "c-cbb"	5. Investigating national underlying situation and collecting "models of good practice" with reference to the topic (case studies) 6. Conducting the first moderated online forum on "Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business" for teachers at European business schools 7. Draft curriculum 8. 1 <sup>st</sup> phase for testing individual components of the curriculum in lessons with students at vocational schools + feed-back	2 <sup>nd</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> month	5. all 6. vlv 7. vlv 8. all	5. 3 6. 3 7. 3 8. 5
3 Preparation of the conference	9. Brochures have been sent out; advertisements	9. Conference marketing; enlisting participants; enlisting speakers	2 <sup>nd</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> month	9. Vlv 10. Vlv	9. 3 10. 1

	<p>have been placed in European specialist magazines; conference has been announced in the Internet; participants are registering for the conference; speakers have been enlisted</p> <p>10. Talks and workshops have been prepared as regards their content</p> <p>11. Conference is able to function</p> <p>12. Questionnaire</p>	<p>10. Collecting conference contributions from speakers</p> <p>11. Organising of conference logistics</p> <p>12. Developing a questionnaire for participants of the conference</p>		<p>11. All</p> <p>12. Vlw</p>	<p>11. 5</p> <p>12. 1</p>
4 Holding conference	<p>13. Successful staging of conference</p> <p>14. Improved draft curriculum</p> <p>15. Partial result of evaluation: Statements by participants of the conference</p>	<p>13. Europe-wide conference "Cross-cultural Behaviour in Business"</p> <p>14. Presentation of the draft curriculum</p> <p>15. Evaluation of the questionnaire for participants to assess the project</p>	28 August -1 September 2002	<p>13. All</p> <p>14. Vlw</p> <p>15. vlw</p>	<p>13. 14</p> <p>14. 1</p> <p>15. 2</p>
5 Production of curriculum and conference reader	<p>16. Curriculum "c-cbb", evaluation of discussion forums and curriculum</p> <p>17. see 18</p> <p>18. Revised curriculum</p> <p>19. Partial result of evaluation: evaluation of work on and content of the curriculum</p> <p>20. Curriculum</p> <p>21. Reader on the conference</p>	<p>16. Revision of the curriculum</p> <p>17. 2<sup>nd</sup> phase for testing individual components of the curriculum in lessons with students at vocational schools</p> <p>18. Preparation/realisation of conference follow-up in the 2<sup>nd</sup> moderated online forum for teachers at European business schools</p> <p>19. Poll of participants / evaluation of work on the curriculum</p> <p>20. Compiling the curriculum (editing, layout, printing)</p> <p>21. Compiling a conference reader (editing, layout, printing)</p>	9 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> month	<p>16. VLW</p> <p>17. all</p> <p>18. all</p> <p>19. vlw</p> <p>20. vlw</p> <p>21. vlw</p>	<p>16. 2</p> <p>17. 5</p> <p>18. 3</p> <p>19. 1</p> <p>20. 2</p> <p>21. 2,5</p>
6 Evaluation / transfer / dissemination	<p>22. Dissemination of conference results</p> <p>23. Partial result of evaluation: project success</p>	<p>22. Sending out the conference reader; publicising it in the specialist and daily press</p>	12 <sup>th</sup> month	<p>22. VLW</p> <p>23. all</p> <p>24. vlw</p>	<p>22. 1</p> <p>23. 3</p> <p>24. 2</p>



	has been assessed, measures to ensure that project results remain effective after the project has come to an end have been decided	23. Evaluating results and overall evaluation by European steering group; discussing and planning measures to safeguard effectiveness via e-mail			
	24. Making project contents known to specialist sector	24. Publicising a specialist essay			

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