



INTEGRATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND WORK EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

National Report of the Republic of Poland

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INTRODUCTION

The WEXHE Project

The project responds to the concerns expressed by stakeholders on the shortcomings in the labour market orientation of Higher Education (HE), focusing on the balance between practical and theoretical learning in HE and to mismatches between the skills sets of graduates and the skills they require during their early careers. EU countries have experienced a substantial increase in graduate unemployment and a decrease of quality of their employment. European students and graduates report continuously that they are worried about their careers. At the same time employers and employers' organisations report they are having increasing difficulties in finding graduates with matching skills.

In this Knowledge Alliance, Integrating Entrepreneurship and Work Experience into Higher Education (IEWEXHE), enterprises, associations and HEIs come together to identify and analyse current provision of work experience in HEIs in 7 different EU countries, generating 84 case studies of work-based learning (WBL) involving all four types of disciplinary sectors (hard-pure, e.g. natural sciences; soft-pure, e.g. humanities and social sciences; hard-applied, e.g. medicine and soft-applied, e.g. social work) covering work placements, traineeships and entrepreneurships.

The project aims to:

- increase capacity of HE staff and enterprises to provide high quality work experience and entrepreneurship,
- identify what kind of WBL leads to high quality jobs,
- support the accreditation of WBL through ECTS and effective Quality Assurance,
- ensure that skills needs of employers are understood,

The project will review existing and support further policy development in this field.

1st year milestone

The purpose of this National Report (describing activity of Polish partner) is threefold:

1. Describe the methodology used to write national literature review and the steps used to identify, select and write the 12 cases of good WBL practice.
2. Detail the challenges faced, the gaps found, and lessons learned in this first phase of the research.
3. Briefly describe the results obtained, based on surveys and interviews with an experts.
4. Summary of the cases describing best practices.

1. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned in the introduction, this section will describe the methods used to write the literature review and the steps used to identify, select and write 12 cases of good WBL practice identified in Poland.

1.1. Literature Review

Purpose of national literature review is to discover how each country – partner of the WEXHE Project define Work Base Learning (WBL) and how it is support by the educational system and authorities. Moreover literature analysis should cover the background of WBL, so its evolution and influence on the labor market and educational system.

Five important questions were ask. They cover following topics: How WBL is understood in Poland, what types of WBL can be found, what is the current status of WBL and level of development, what are the main drivers and barriers in development of WBL and what long-term results can be expected from WBL implementation.

The biggest challenge of the analysis was to find the right literature, as the subject of WBL in higher education is not a popular research topic in Poland. The WBL is mentioned in the context of university management and market positioning of private universities, as well as WBL in the context of CSR. There is very little monograph on the practical education of students.

How WBL is understood in Poland

It was very difficult to find definition of WBL in Polish literature, not only in official governmental documents, universities strategies, but also in scientific publications.

Most of the discussion about WBL is covered by vocational and technical schools (secondary school). Dual education system (based on the German model) is well described. When looking for the same issue regarding higher education system, we could not find strict definition nor a general description.

In the Regulation on the conditions of conducting studies¹ some specific requirements related to the implementation of practical activities have been formulated:

- enrolled in the program of study for a practical course related to practical vocational training should take place in conditions appropriate for the scope of practice and allow direct execution appropriate practical activities by students,
- the organizational unit of the university should provide students with a proper mode of attendance practices envisaged in the education program.

After one of the interview we were also given the Rector's order describing the way of organizing and supervising student internships, but still it was impossible to find the WBL definition.

WBL is understood as addition to practical studies (where specific abilities are required from absolvent – mostly at technical and medical universities). In humanistic studies it was impossible to find literature definition.

In general, for vocational and technical schools WBL is described as cooperation between school and entrepreneur that allow schoolgoers to take part in process of manufacturing connected with gaining theoretical knowledge helpful to understand that process. This definition can be use also to describe WBL in relations between universities and business partners.

¹ <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20140001370>

What types of WBL can be found

Most of the WBL typology is the same as in other EU countries. Work placement, business incubators and post graduated specialized courses are commonly found and use at Polish universities. Lack of literature on the effects of this form of education may indicate, that it is underestimated by the scientific community. The remaining forms of practical training, such as simulation companies and internships for graduates, are rather new and have not yet reached an in-depth analysis, although the first reflections on this topic are beginning to emerge.

At this point we would just like to mention, that during interview with one of the experts we were given the example of less common and well organized type of WBL. Because we couldn't find any literature analysis, the case was described in detail when discussing the results of the case studies.

What is the current status of WBL and level of development

Poland belongs to a group of countries with a high number of students, in absolute and relative terms, so the transmission of entrepreneurial values through the formal educational system could have a significant effect on the development of entrepreneurship and building a knowledge-based economy.

The role of the formal education system, especially at the tertiary level, is probably underestimated, and has great potential to influence the entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviour of students and graduates.

There are many examples of high quality WBL, but still this is not a common phenomenon.

It is also not possible to identify apparent qualitative differences between the public and private sectors of science. There are some public universities (where business model is based on reputation) that do not have a well-developed system of practices, similarly, there are private universities that do not see an high-quality practices as a strengthening of their market position. This conclusion was proved during case studies.

What are the main drivers and barriers in development of WBL

The main problem in WBL implementation are different expectations of student, HEI and employers. HEI is interested in meeting the expectation of Polish Accreditation Committee, related to quality training and relation with labor market. Therefore it focus on gaining specific skills, like e.g. elaboration of the report, information gathering and analyses, setting priorities or tasks planning. HEI is interested also in social and civic competences, like e.g. communication, team work or business ethics. Employers in many instances are interested in low cost or cost free employers during holiday time, to replace regular employees. Only small part of them are aware of the incentives of employing the students with new qualification and in possible future employees. Students are interested mostly in gaining professional experience, which is a key to labor market. Therefore they accept the work without payment to be able to show in CV completed work placements.

Because of the situation on labor market (very small unemployment rate) employers/business start to understand that well organized system of training for students may give them opportunity to recruit and train employees even before their employment (during internships). For this reason, it is to be expected that the quality of practices will improve significantly in the near future. During interviews, most companies pointed to this factor as one of the reasons for greater involvement in WBL.

High quality WBL is similar to mediation. Three sides of the WBL must meet with the expectations and outcomes. When this is done, cooperation is very effective. During case study we discover different (than described in the Project) type of WBL, that allow business to take active part in educational process without meeting many formal obligations.

What long-term results can be expected from WBL implementation

WBL can increase the quality of higher education, bringing the education process closer to real situation on the labor market. However current practice require significant changes. Ministry of Higher Education is aware of the problems with WBL and is planning the changes in regulations concerning student's work placements. Also the duration of the work placement would be prolonged up to 6 months.

Employers report the problem with organization of students work placement during summer holiday, therefore HEI would be more flexible in planning working time. From the point of view of students it would be also crucial to involve more SME's to students work placement program. SME's located also in small towns and villages, would scale down the cost of work placements for students living in the province. Unified standards for work placement should precisely describe topics of training, expected results, and method of evaluation of the training program.

1.2. Case Studies

Locating cases

In order to select appropriate examples of WBL, we have established contact with a number of coaches, research workers, presidents of chambers of commerce and academics.

Unfortunately, they were not always able to provide appropriate examples of practices (in the research areas, which the project and typology assumed). The examples provided included mainly student internships and postgraduate training. Areas in which the experts had a problem with the indication of good quality WBL were the main humanities.

For this reason, the researchers also conducted independent research on the search for WBL examples that meet the WEXHE criteria. As a result of searching for information about WBL in the missing areas, it was possible to select the examples for further analysis. The acquisition of information took place mainly through the analysis of faculties websites (humanities and history), searching for information about the activity of science clubs, at conferences (where WBL results were presented) and in specialist press where students often publish.

Selecting the cases

The choice of high-quality WBL for further research was difficult. A number of relevant examples could not be collected in the soft-pure and hard-pure areas. In particular, the soft-pure area (historical science) has experienced difficulties due to the lack of experts who would be able to provide details of the analysed WBL. Here, the examples were collected by the researchers themselves and due to the random information they had. It was not possible to immediately assess whether the WBL meets the WEXHE criteria.

We managed to implement the project guidelines – collect 2 WBL examples for each of the analysed cases (4 disciplinary areas x 3 modes of delivery x 2 cases per model).

Not all examples selected by the national team have been approved by MUAS. Most of the objections concerned too little institutionalization of cooperation between science and business, in some cases the problem was the lack of cooperation of the university with a specific entrepreneur.

At the WBL selection stage, the required 12 examples were collected for further analysis (for each area and delivery model).

Due to the obstacles encountered (described in the further part of the report) some of the originally selected examples of WBL were abandoned and an attempt to identify further ones was made.

Often accidental contacts between experts from the Polish Chamber of Commerce and business or science representatives helped here. During each organized conference or other event, participants were briefed on the WEXHE project with the question of whether they could indicate an example of good quality WBL.

Due to the large number of events organized in PCC, the scale effect has worked and new examples have been identified, and what's more, thanks to the favour of people giving us information about WBL, it was easy to reach the direct participants of the process, which significantly shortened the time needed for organizing and conducting the interviews.

Writing the Cases

Preparatory work for the interview proved to be very difficult in Polish conditions. Very quickly, the researchers found that the WEXHE's assumptions regarding the organization of surveys are in practice impossible to meet. This problem is described in more detail later in the report.

In most cases, the interview was conducted at the company / university headquarters or at the PCC headquarters. Even in the case of WBL located outside of Warsaw (PCC headquarters), often the stakeholders are connected with the capital and it was possible to conduct an interview without the need to travel by the researcher.

In other cases, the interview was conducted by phone.

Our observations indicate, however, that the personal interviews gave much more secondary information, which allowed a much better understanding of the context of the described WBL model.

Also personal interviews brought much more easily information about problems related to the implementation of WBL. In the case of telephone conversations, the interlocutors usually limited themselves to briefly answering the questions. It definitely hindered a deeper understanding of the relationships and dependencies between the parties.

In a few cases, after comparing the information obtained from the interlocutor with external data possessed by the researcher, it resulted in the need for an additional contact and verification of some statements.

In the case of a telephone interview, it lasted about 30 – 45 min. In the case of direct contact interviews lasted often over 3 hours. They were full of digression from the interviewer's professional life, which helped to dispel the motives that motivated them when they got involved in WBL

The websites of companies and universities were most often used as the source of external data. We did not find descriptions of the analysed WBL in the scientific literature or documents created by the administration.

Due to the specificity of PCC, most of the interviews were conducted with business representatives. This caused that it was very difficult to meet the condition of conducting an interview with two people involved in the described WBL.

In the case of entrepreneurs, information on the duration of the interview and the need to hold a conversation with two people in almost every case caused refusal to participate in the study. This is described in more detail later in the report.

Once the data collection was finished, the researcher wrote the case and sent it back to the organization for approval. All cases were well accepted, with only minor observations (normally information to be added that was not covered in the interview).

2. CHALLENGES, GAPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In this part of the report, we describe the barriers that we encountered during the analysis of literature and the collection of WBL / interviews. We describe problems from the point of view of Polish specifics, but we suspect that similar problems can be found in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

2.1. Literature Review

In the case of literature analysis, the problem was to prepare an appropriate query. We did not find any monographs or articles describing the WBL phenomenon, the way it was organized, and the impact on learning processes or business processes.

All information about literature on the subject of WBL was collected by the analysis of materials on the quality of the education process, modernization of university education programmes or on the challenges of the future labour market.

This illustrates that in Poland the topic of WBL is not the subject of deepened scientific research. Although the interest of WBL on the part of business is steadily growing, universities and scientists still do not see it as applied in-depth to analyse this phenomenon and describe it in a scientific way.

During the literature research, we were unable to complete all the assumptions imposed by the WEXHE. For example, we have not been able to find the literature definition of WBL.

The above conclusions also give guidance on how to promote the results of the WEXHE project. It should be considered whether greater emphasis should not be placed on promoting the project among business and student representatives as parties more interested in the implementation of good quality WBL.

2.2. Case Studies

After selecting WBL examples for analysis and conducting interviews, it quickly turned out that where the expert pointing out the given example was not strongly associated with it, it was very difficult to get interested parties to participate in the study. In some cases, we received a refusal straight away, in others after the initial acceptance the site refused before the interview.

We see the reasons for refusal in the specificity of the Polish market in connection with the project's guidelines. Polish entrepreneurs and universities are "flooded" with requests to complete surveys and participate in research. These are mainly works financed or co-financed by the EU. In practice, it proved impossible to persuade business representatives for an hour of conversation with an unknown person.

The model of obtaining a questionnaire (contact by e-mail, telephone contact, interview, acceptance) described in WEXHE turned out to be ineffective in Polish conditions. Practice has shown that in many cases the e-mail describing the project's assumptions and the course of the interview (duration and number of people involved) discouraged potential participants of the survey. This has caused some originally selected examples WBL has not been analysed. During the telephone contact the researcher obtained information that the entrepreneur is not interested in participating in the survey.

Better results were achieved when initiating telephone contact (if managed to reach the decision maker). In such a scenario, during the conversation, researcher could explain the doubts of the company's representative and possibly propose compromise solutions (shortening the duration of the interview, limiting the number of people, earlier submitting the main questions to the interview).

Often, people who were to be interviewed were afraid that they would not have enough knowledge about the company, its motives and WBL effects. the telephone conversation helped to dispel these fears.

In the second step, after obtaining the preliminary consent to participate in the survey, the researcher sent information about the Project by e-mail.

In one of the cases where the cooperation between the technical university and the company controlled by the state treasury was to be analysed, after the initial consent company refused to answer in the survey, pointing lack of consent of the ministry.

Entrepreneurs do not need the WBL promotion in which they participate, because they are very well recognized at the university with which they cooperate. Their promotion takes place through the very implementation of WBL, and then recruitment actions among graduates.

Even if the researcher was introduced to the company by an expert who pointed to the example of WBL, a very discouraging condition was the information on the interview with two people. For most entrepreneurs, this was a condition that definitely excludes their participation in the survey. Only the largest companies could be persuaded for such a model, and most often provided that both employees participated in the meeting with the researcher at the same time. This in part made it impossible to obtain two independent assessments of the analysed WBL.

In the case of the HEI's, the biggest problem was reaching person directly responsible for the implementation or supervision of WBL. Very often it is not the dean for internships. If the expert at the stage of indicating the WBL did not provide a specific contact person, finding it in the structure of the university was extremely difficult and time-consuming.

Without major problems, we managed to analyse the cooperation of the Warsaw University of Technology Management Faculty, the Warsaw School of Economics and the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities. The WBL programs implemented by these universities are institutionalized and promoted in a number of ways.

The only effective solution for obtaining a survey was to use private knowledge of the researcher or an expert pointing to WBL. If the expert pointing to the WBL was not involved in it or personally did not know the people in the company / HEI's that were responsible for WBL, it was impossible to obtain the survey.

In conclusion, during the surveys, we encountered major difficulties that did not allow the task to be completed on time. additionally, in some cases, the interview with the second representative of the organization was abandoned. As a compensation, an in-depth investigator's own research was used. In addition, a good short-term interview with the respondents after 1 to 2 weeks was a good solution for a slightly wider perspective.

3. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Below we present the conclusions of the surveys. The first part is the WBL description in Poland. The second part describes a WBL model other than the one defined in the assumptions of the project, the third part describes the motives that cause the parties to engage in WBL and also causes the greatest obstacles in the implementation of WBL.

3.1. WBL in the Poland

WBL in Poland is difficult to define. In the case of internships for students, this is one of the obligatory elements of the education process. It results from universally binding educational law. Universities most often create formal rules of practice and appoint coordinators.

It does not mean, however, that universities always closely supervise the course of internships or strive for high quality of WBL. The necessity of providing internships for each student makes it very difficult to coordinate the whole process.

During the interviews, we identified examples where good supervision of the best quality of internships meant that the number of high quality internships within WBL exceeded the number of eager students. It is, however, an isolated case and resulting from the consistently structured policy of the university.

In most cases, good quality WBL for students results from the personal relationship between the researcher and the company. Very often, a contact person in a company is a graduate of a given university or a mentee of an academic employee.

It seems that we are at the first stage of consciously building a network of contacts with a bachelor by universities, which will enable a significant improvement in the quality of internships.

Currently, many universities combine traineeships with collecting materials for BA or MA thesis. This is a large mental change at universities. Until recently thesis BA or MA – formally – had to have a theoretical dimension and researches were limited to obtaining data from the literature.

During the interviews we noticed that the persons responsible for WBL at universities notice a lot of positive aspects of such cooperation, both for universities, students and business.

In the case of the business side, there has also been a large mental change in recent years.

First of all, entrepreneurs indicate that cooperation with universities is easier. In part, this may be due to changes in the HEI's area and partly due to greater awareness of entrepreneurs.

Secondly, entrepreneurs are moving away from the practice model, during which the student did everything in favour of specialization. It results from the desire to provide the student with practical knowledge. Such an investment in the educational process allows the company to build a portfolio of future employees. Already at the practice stage, they can be assessed for soft skills and involvement.

3.2. New model of cooperation

during the research we came across a different model of cooperation between HEI's and business than defined in WEXHE. The Modern Business Management Program arose from the sense of mission of the banking sector in Poland. The Polish Bank Association established a special purpose company whose task is to disseminate financial knowledge. One of the activities is to conduct classes for students (any field of study) during which they learn about the operation of the banking system, social security, or starting their own business.

As part of the program, cooperation was established with over 100 universities in Poland. Classes are taught at the university, in a network of regular classes. They are run by practitioners recruited by the Program – bank employees, Social Insurance Institution employees, entrepreneurs and employees of chambers of commerce.

The program is aimed at transferring practical economic knowledge and solves the problem of access to the university of practitioners.

Often lecturers of individual subjects try to officially invite people from outside the university to conduct classes. However, this involves the need to prepare syllabus and numerous formal guest duties, which effectively discourages them from such cooperation.

In the analysed example, the Program assumes the burden of formal preparation of classes.

Each meeting with students is assessed (both by a tutor and students). In the case of a negative evaluation, the class program is revised or the lecturers are changed.

The program is cyclical, there are universities where each student has completed at least one course.

The described example surprised with its nationwide reach and universality. It is an open system, each university can apply to participate in the Program. It does not generate any costs on its side.

Thanks to the network of contacts with the world of finance and business, the Program has the opportunity to invite practitioners – specialists. Most often such cooperation takes place without a salary for the trainer.

Example of the Modern Business Management Program showed us how to overcome the formal difficulties resulting from access to the university. He also showed that there is a universal practical knowledge, which should be passed on to students of all fields of study.

The program effectively reaches practical economic knowledge not only to students of finance, banking and management departments, but also to humanities, art and biological universities, where the deficit of such knowledge is much larger.

3.3. Drivers and barriers

HEI'S drivers

HEI's representatives can distinguish two points of view from surveys conducted with HEI's representatives. One in the first place set the university / faculty, the second indicated the need of better student education and tightening relationships with business.

Although the priorities for the surveyed researchers were different, they agreed that good quality WBL is beneficial to all parties (HEI's / business / students).

The most frequently mentioned drivers were:

- increasing the prestige of the university, which implies a greater interest of students in a given field of study,
- financial benefits (often at business academies / departments, business councils are created - bodies composed of representatives of the largest companies cooperating with the university, most often, such a meeting involves an annual donation to the university); in the case of postgraduate education programs, the greater interest in the course, the greater the profit of the university,
- closer cooperation with a business, which may in the future result in cooperation in other fields, e.g. research, joint projects,
- providing students with knowledge and skills useful in the labour market – thanks to this, the percentage of unemployed among graduates is low, which translates into the prestige of the university.

As an impulse for the development of WBL at universities, it is necessary to indicate groups of people who, despite the lack of formal correspondence for WBL, establish and develop individual contacts

with representatives of the business. Where universities do not support WBL systematically, researchers from individual faculties or departments very often take over the initiative.

There are also universities that really care about good relations with business through thriving career offices or a very flexible approach to creating new courses and postgraduate courses. In such cases, it is possible to create a model in which the business come to the university with offers of internships, seeing the benefits for their activities.

This shows that a well-organized system of practices, combined with a high level of teaching, allows to build a WBL model in which the university does not have to proactively seek business partners.

HEI's barriers

In spite of obligatory practices, HEIs / departments are not always interested in systemically building high quality WBL. A formal framework for the system of practices are created and proxies are appointed, but HEI's are not pro-active.

Barrier at reputable public universities is often the mentality of the authorities, which assume that due to the high position of the university in the rankings, business representatives will selflessly support the university.

Also the excessive formalism of procedures was indicated by the respondents as an obstacle in building WBL. For example, the creation of a new field of study, which would arise from the initiative of an entrepreneur lasts over a year.

The fact that excessive formalism is still a problem at universities also shows an example of the success of the NZB Program (described above). If you manage to build an institution that takes over the formal responsibilities of WBL, this model of cooperation is very popular and attracts business representatives.

A positive aspect that we have noticed during the research is that students are more and more appreciative of the role of practices in learning disabilities and they themselves have the initiative to find the right company to do the internships. In such cases, the university / department always tries to help in establishing cooperation.

Business drivers

The reason for cooperation with HEI's most often repeated by business representatives is the need to build a portfolio of job candidates.

The entrepreneur has the opportunity to observe students during internships, assess their behaviour and competences. In addition, such a student, coming to work knows the organization and the rules prevailing in it.

In one of the cooperation models (Warsaw School of Economics), students must undergo competence and knowledge tests before being admitted to the internship program. These are the same tests that job seekers are subjected to. Thanks to the high quality of WBL, an entrepreneur can build (without incurring costs for external recruitment) a database of people with demanded competencies. It significantly reduces operating costs.

Analogously, cooperation in creating postgraduate courses was caused by the desire to educate people with appropriate competences. Thanks to the fact that the company's representatives conducted classes with students, they could:

- promote the company and its values among potential job candidates,
- observe potential candidates and evaluate them,
- through a system of scholarships and awards, tie a participant to the course and the company,
- offer a job during or after the course.

Also the ethical dimension of cooperation was often raised. Entrepreneurs treat cooperation in HEI's as part of a responsible business strategy (CSR). The reasons for starting cooperation were often phrases: responsibility, willingness to help students, mission.

To sum up, the business approach to WBL is related to the situation on the labour market. Entrepreneurs are increasingly aware of the need to take active actions to recruit employees. By starting this process, already at the stage of education, the student candidate is given access to desired employees in an easy and cheap way. Locating people with analogous competences from the market (external recruitment) would be much more expensive and burdened with higher risk.

Business barriers

During the interviews we were unable to identify barriers to establishing cooperation with HEI's. Entrepreneurs, if they decide to cooperate, reserve a budget for this purpose and delegate employees. Because they provide measurable benefits of cooperation, it continues without hindrance.

3.4. The future of WBL

WBL in Poland has changed radically over the past few years and is beginning to resemble the model of Western European countries. Both universities and entrepreneurs recognize the need to create high quality WBL.

For now, the majority of activities are concentrated in the area of the most common practices.

On the basis of the experience and business needs gained, the cooperation is extended to other forms of WBL, such as the joint organization of post-graduate studies and courses as well as simulation games.

We expect further, very fast development of WBL in all areas. The situation on the labour market will force closer cooperation between business and HEI's. It is to be expected that business will be the initiator of these activities. Such shaped demand for work gives universities the possibility of evolutionary adaptation to new realities.

The students' attitude towards completed traineeships and postgraduate courses also changes. They often do not want to meet a formal condition or obtain a diploma, but to acquire specific skills useful in professional life.

4. SUMMARY

The labour market in Poland stands out from other European Union countries. There are many industrial plants in Poland what is an effect of direct foreign investments. This phenomenon, together with the large industrial traditions from the times of the Polish People's Republic (the period from 1945 to 1989), means that the market needs medium-level employees with technical education all the time. The problem for the labour market is a generational change, which in combination with a high demand for labour generates problems with recruitment in industrial plants.

The situation is different when we analyse situation of university graduates. In some areas, such as IT or medical science, there is a very high demand for work, and even people with less documented experience or from less reputable universities have no bigger problem finding a job.

The situation of graduates of biological and technical studies is different – here the experience gained during studies plays a certain role, but it is not crucial.

The graduates of humanities, sociology and management have the biggest problem with finding a job after graduation. Despite the difficulties in finding a job, for many years these fields of study have been very successful in Poland.

In these areas there is an oversupply of employees and employers attach great importance to the employment of experienced employees. They are not willing to invest in new employees due to high turnover - expenditures do not pay, but they serve the competition.

The highly volatile unemployment rate has a very large impact on the graduates' labour market. In 1992, it was 12%, in 1995 – 17%, in 1999 – 9%, in 2002 – 2004 – over 20%, 2009 – 9%, then it grew to about 13%, and now – in 2018 amount to 5%.

The strongly fluctuated labour market did not serve to build favourable conditions for WBL between entrepreneurs and universities. This was due to the relatively high unemployment, especially among young people and the short cycle between low and high unemployment. Unemployment among university graduates in some years was even twice as high as the average unemployment rate. The situation was not as bad as in Greece or Spain, but still unemployment in this group was higher than the EU average.

Such a market situation meant that there are few successful examples of long-term cooperation for WBL. Experts indicating examples of WBL pointed to the fact that program councils at universities, (with business representatives as a members), have an impact on curricula, but it is still filling the gaps in the theory of teaching, rather than creating modules for the practical education of students.

The best long-lasting examples of practices, especially in the area of management and marketing, are based on the charisma of several academic employees or result from the missionary approach of a large company to cooperate with the education sector. While conducting surveys, it turned out that the main obstacle to building or developing successful programs is excessive formalism at universities - for example, the need to obtain approval for the creation of a new course of study a year before its commencement. The second major obstacle to a successful WBL is the attitude of renowned universities to treat such cooperation unilaterally. Universities want to maximize their benefits - accept donations, create internships for students, but do not pay attention to the needs of business - the desire to get to know the student better before hiring, transferring part of the knowledge while studying, not after employment.

This is a phenomenon that could not be identified in the literature on the subject. A very big difficulty is the lack of scientific literature on WBL in Poland. In the public discourse there is a debate about the reform of vocational education (an attempt to build a dual model), while there are no studies concerning the highest level of education. Mentions on the need to increase practical aspects transfer

of knowledge to students are raised on the occasion of demographic and labour market analyses. We have not been able to find any major analysis of the WBL phenomenon itself.

This is partly a repetition of the situation we were dealing with in the EMCOSU project, where the literature on cooperation between science and business was also residual. Unfortunately, over the past few years, the subject of BWL has not gained significance from the point of view of scientific research of this phenomenon. Lack of statistical data from universities regarding the quality of apprenticeships, the situation of graduates in the labour market or feedback on the quality of education received. Such mechanisms at universities are only being created, and forced by them than demographic and increasing competition in the area of education. Universities are beginning to recognize the success of graduates in the labour market as their success, although it is still not a common thought.

Both the situation on the labour market in the previous 20 years and the attitude of the universities caused that there are very few examples of high quality WBL. Lack of systemic approach at universities to this issue, WBL occurs "insularly" and most often it was built on the basis of private relations of a researcher with a company.

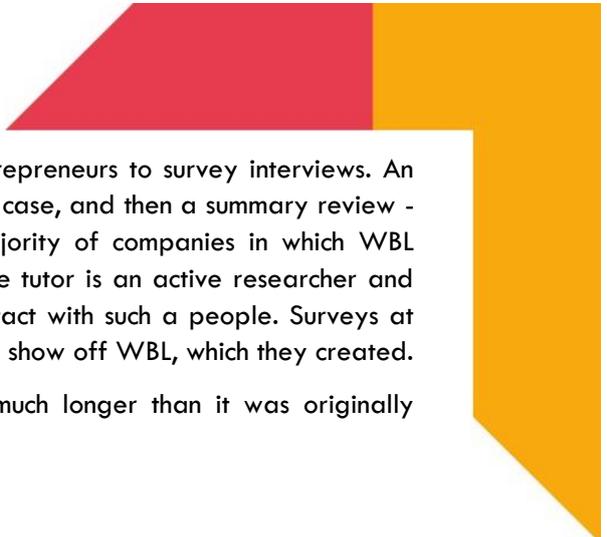
Although internships during studies are compulsory, for a long time they were not strongly related to the curriculum. They were often of a seeming nature and were treated as a formality. The financial factor also disturbed the development of high quality WBL in the area of internships. Until recently, paid internships in Poland were rare. This meant that the student did not feel obliged to work and acquire knowledge, and the entrepreneur did not have excessive expectations for him/her.

In the case of start-up's using the help of companies with an established market tradition, it is easiest to find examples in the field of IT, technical design and artistic design. Investments in start-up's are treated by the companies as part of a business model that allows them to operate in new areas of the market without incurring significant business risk.

We are currently at the transformation stage. The population decline, the emigration to the countries of the "old EU" and the very low unemployment mean that employers quickly began to make cooperation dependant on quality of internships. Universities that did not develop validation mechanisms and did not build high-quality WBL are currently unable to meet these requirements. It is worrying that there are also renowned public universities in this group. For a long time they came out of the assumption that just obtaining a diploma of a given university guarantees a graduate's job. While 15-10 years ago, such a position was justified, employers have paid more attention to the candidate's experience for at least 5 years. Lack of practical experience in the areas of IT, medicine and technology significantly hinders finding a job. In the case of humanities, building good and widespread WBL is difficult due to the large number of students in these fields, and on the other hand there is a problem of determining their place on the labour market, which also determines the type of practical knowledge they should acquire.

Regardless of the opportunities on the labour market, we have found a low level of knowledge about entrepreneurship. Both students of IT, management, technical or artistic sciences are not taught about the principles of running businesses, market analyses, and obtaining financing. This means that despite some very good business ideas, graduates do not decide to start their own businesses. Self-employment could be an interesting alternative especially for students of faculties, where the existence of over-supply of employees. Low social capital as well as the lack of basic business knowledge often means that such people do not work in the profession.

During the research we met with an interesting initiative described as NZB. It defies somewhat the guidelines of the Project, but it is interesting due to the elimination of most obstacles regarding the introduction of practical aspects of economic knowledge to universities (even those not directionally related to this subject). In addition, it is an example of the implementation of mission business, without the expectation of benefits from the university. Probably the last aspect influenced the popularity of the program in Polish conditions.



The biggest difficulty in collecting data was the reluctance of entrepreneurs to survey interviews. An extensive questionnaire, the need to conduct two interviews for one case, and then a summary review - these were the conditions that caused the withdrawal of the majority of companies in which WBL examples were originally identified. In a part of the university, the tutor is an active researcher and WBL is a side task for him. This causes a significantly difficult contact with such a people. Surveys at universities were most easily carried out with people who wanted to show off WBL, which they created. The above causes that collecting good examples of WBL took much longer than it was originally assumed.