Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Erasmus+ SUCSESS Project

'SUCSESS'

Strengthening university-enterprise cooperation in South Africa to support regional development by enhancing lifelong learning skills, social innovations and inclusivity / SUCSESS

Key Research Findings

28 October 2020

Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education
Project Reference: 610189-EPP-1-2019-1-FI-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Duration: 36 Months
Project Management: Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Erasmus+
SUCSESS
Project

Research Objectives

1. To determine whether the *teaching environment* is currently producing the *competencies and skills* required by industry for **employability** (to have the skills and personal attributes to gain employment and be successful in chosen field)

2. To assess the impact of *university/industry collaboration activities* on students' **work readiness (**make a dynamic start in industry and quickly adapt to the job)

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Erasmus+
SUCSESS
Project

Research Methodology

- Data collection: Tourism, Hospitality and Business Management
  - Surveyed senior students - online questionnaire (509)
  - Interviewed lecturers (44)
  - Interviewed industry and government (29)
- **South Africa**, UK and Finland
  - Benchmarking
  - Best case practices

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Key findings
Overall

Erasmus+ SUCSESS Project

University reputation

- Students
- Industry
- Lecturers

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Key findings

Erasmus+
SUCSESS
Project

Role of lecturers and teaching environment in career preparation

South Africa vs Finland/UK

- Take responsibility for tasks
- Take initiative
- Meet deadlines

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Erasmus+
SUCSESS
Project

Key findings

More South African students (vs Finland/UK)

- Low expectation of finding ideal job
- Uncertain of workplace expectations
- Afraid to start looking for a job

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Key findings
Employability

Erasmus+ SUCSESS Project

What makes a student "employable"? Industry:

1. Attitude
   - ✓ Willingness to learn/open-mindedness
   - ✓ Adaptability
   - ✓ Reliability
   - ✓ Confidence
2. Skills/competencies (apart from technical/job specific)
   - ✓ Communication
   - ✓ Problem-solving
   - ✓ Teamwork
   - ✓ Technological

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Key findings
Teaching gaps

Erasmus+ SUCSESS Project

Industry generally satisfied with performance of universities in preparing students for work but see **gaps** in

- Entrepreneurial skills
- Technological skills
- Understanding of the work environment

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Key findings
Overcoming gaps

Erasmus+ SUCSESS Project

Practical exposure increases student employability and work readiness

University/enterprise collaboration (UEC)

Industry collaboration

Simulation (cases)

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Key findings
Collaboration

Erasmus+ SUCSESS Project

Work Integrated Learning/Internships at organisations
Industry Scholarships/bursaries with no formal expectation of employment
Research/development projects about industry issues (but not working with industry)
Research/development projects about industry issues (working in partnership with industry)
Industry Mentorship programmes (industry leaders mentoring students)
Entrepreneurship programmes (e.g. where students have to start some form of venture while studying)
Industry Career advice programmes (e.g. Days, events,)
Incubator type assistant programmes (where students work on developing innovative solutions to business problems)
Recruitment drives by organisations e.g. companies coming to the university to try to recruit students)
Industry/Government Guest Lectures

Industry funding for innovative developmental work
Simulated case study projects (i.e. finding solutions for a real-life type industry case/problem through using simulation techniques)
Practical industry courses/certificates, supplementary to the diploma/degree e.g. practical courses such as Galilieo, Food & Beverage courses)
Industry Workshops/Seminars attended by students
Student presentations to industry as part of assessment
Industry bursaries with an employment outcome after completion of degree/diploma
Student-run enterprises e.g. Campus Tours
Group visits to related industry enterprises (field trips)
Student "Day-at-work" or vacation programmes
Industry involvement in assessment
Practical engagement with alumni (e.g. alumni as mentors)

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Key findings
Collaboration

Erasmus+ SUCSESS Project

- **Low involvement in SA**

  (20% on average, across types of collaboration)

- **Benefits of involvement**

Students

- ✓ Appreciate and respect diversity
- ✓ Learnt more about themselves
- ✓ Mind opened to more career paths
- ✓ Improvement in work skills

Industry

- ✓ Talent spotting
- ✓ Innovation and energy
- ✓ Positive image for organisation

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Key findings
Collaboration

Erasmus+
SUCSESS
Project

Challenges

Lecturers: High student numbers

Industry: Lack of capacity in industry

Students: Lack of resources

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Erasmus+
SUCSESS
Project

The consequences of the **COVID-19 pandemic** presents a key challenge for collaboration practices, employability and general economic growth and, due to the uncertainty, students need to:

- Build networks even before graduation
- Look to technology as having an increasingly important role in the work environment
- Focus on resourcefulness and entrepreneurship

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Key recommendations

Erasmus+ SUCSESS Project

Teaching environment

- Curriculum and industry alignment
- Student awareness of relevance of studies to industry
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Technological awareness and capabilities
- Business ethics

Collaboration

- Using technology (e.g.“Virtual” collaboration)
- Credit-bearing
- Incentives for lecturers
- Two-way process

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Erasmus+
SUCSESS
Project

Thank you

The 'SUCSESS' Partners