

Leonardo Academia 2007
Careers Europe Guidance Exchange Programme
Country visited: Luxembourg
From Monday 7th of May up to Friday 11th May 2007

Placement Aim:

- Visit to **Luxembourg** to gather information on their guidance, education and employment systems.

Placement Objectives:

- This offered the opportunity to gain a different perspective on educational and guidance provision in Luxembourg, and the significance of guidance in a wider context. Also taken into consideration, were the other delegate's guidance systems.
- The programme offered a unique overview of the ways that common issues are dealt with across Europe, and the importance of the European dimension within guidance.

Introduction:

Luxembourg Placement: comprised a multi-national group of six guidance practitioners from across the European Union. They included two from the UK, myself from Northumberland (Vicky Jackman Personal adviser), working impartially both in school and in the local community, Hertfordshire careers service Rebecca Welch, working with special educational needs (SEN). Alejandra ESquivias from Spain, is a psychologist based in Granada. The two French colleagues were also both psychologists, Nathalie Ploquin who work's in the centre of Paris, and Chantal Bergeon who works around the outskirts of Paris, and Susanne Ericsson, school

Guidance Councillor from Sweden, just outside Stockholm. Our Luxembourg host Jean-Jacques' Ruppert .Presentations and programme delivery was bi-lingual in French and English.

The placement focussed on an introduction to the Luxembourg education and guidance system, with an opportunity to consider “good” communication in educational and vocational guidance, and to deliberate on “does guidance really matter?”

Background:

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg describes itself as sitting at the cross-roads of Europe – in many different senses- and is a land-locked state, covering 2,586 square kilometres, bordered by France, Belgium and Germany.

NB: There is a great tourist opportunity to be in three Countries within six seconds. You can travel to all the surrounding Countries from a tourist's point of interest within two hours.

It is a constitutional monarchy, with the Grand Duke as Head of State and a parliamentary democracy. The administrative structure consists of 3 districts, 12 cantons and 118 town council areas. There are two main cities – the capital Luxembourg and Esch-sur-Alzette. The latter was the base for the programme. It is a multi-lingual society with three main languages of Luxembourgish, French and German. The English Language is being introduced to the banking community within the Country's infra-structure.

The population of Luxembourg stands at 455,000. This constitutes a doubling within a century. Significantly, 39% of the population are non-nationals, embracing 150

other nationalities, particularly Portuguese, Italian, French, Belgian, and German. In terms of demographics, it is an ageing population with a simultaneous decrease in the under-15's. 67% of the workforce are foreigners, with notable features in recent years of an increase in cross border workers (over half are French) and a rise in female employment. 80% of Luxembourg's nationals' work in public services. (Civil Service), and unemployment stands at 4.2%. The population in Northumberland is 311,400 size of county 5,013 km Ethnicity 99% white. There is evidence that the young people in Northumberland do not like to travel out of there areas.

Early economic growth revolved around iron ore mining, coal, steel and railways with a gradual decline in agricultural component, although it is still noted for its wine production and forestry. Luxembourg is now a considerable and expanding financial centre with over 170 banking institutions and around 100 insurance companies. There is also a developing service industry incorporating telecommunications and audio-visual activities.

The city has several building sites and is constantly changing. One new building has incorporated the old stonework with the new to create an interesting mix. Cultural policies and projects are aimed at promoting social cohesion, acknowledging the diverse nature of Luxembourg's multi-cultural society. Luxembourg City is home to many iconic new buildings by international architects created for the banking, cultural, education and sports sectors.

Programme agenda/General over view:

Based around the secondary school in the town of Mersch, in the Lycee Classique/Technique Annexe de Mersch in central Luxembourg, to offer opportunity for information on education and guidance services and pupil support systems, interspersed with visits,

This school is one of the main bases of our host and programme leader who is a Psychologist with the *Centre de Psychologie et D'Orientation Scolaires (CPOS)*. This comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education with professional staff sworn in by the Minister, constituting a job for life, and classified as a Civil Servant. There was a general consensus from several different views that the Head of the CPOS had lost most of their authority and its workers answered more directly to others.

Some 6 or 7 years ago differing strands of guidance were split up into their separate 4 silos – educational(CPOS / SPOS), social inclusion(ALJ), vocational(ADEM), and HE (CEDIES) - and where once this was a unified provision, practitioners can now only work within their own remit which can make guidance, at times, “ a bit tricky”. There was also reference to the OECD analysis of educational and guidance policies in Luxembourg. There seemed to be an undercurrent of different views of this provision. (Hear Say) that the times are about to change.

For more information on the CPOS check out there official website: www.cpos.lu

Diary schedule and information:

Monday 7/5/07	Tuesday 8/5/07	Wednesday 9/5/07	Thursday 10/5/07	Friday 11/5/07
<i>Introduction to base at Lyc'ee Classique Diekirch Guidance provision referral systemsetc!</i>	<i>Technique training school/college part of Ly'cee SS Centre National de la Formation Profession Elle Continue) Return to Base</i>	<i>Luxembourg He guidance Job Centre Centre d' Information Profession ell Visit to HQ CPOS</i>	<i>Base Presentations From myself and other delegates on there countries guidance and school systems. Meeting's with Social worker and educator</i>	<i>Look first hand at infra-structure Presentation from Mayor of Bertrange VISIT TO PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY FACILITIES, BERTRANGE.</i>

Monday

Secondary School System: is very stratified and selective at age 11/12 years, with standardised tests in later primary school to identify transition pathways and streams. These tests usually confirm school performance and identify progression. At times there can be discrepancies between school performance and test results but usually there are recognisable causes, such as social issues. CPOS have a significant role in this process, working with pupils in the last two years of primary. Tests incorporate language, perception, visual, motor, numeracy and auto-memory skills. The Cattell-Weiss intelligence test is also utilised, once before Xmas and once again after. This looks at attitude and motivation, organisation, autonomy, and work with stress. Educational tests are obligatory, and others optional with parental agreement. The system is highly selective with language barriers being a major problem. Linguistic skills across 3 languages are essential from an early age. There are 3 main streams:-

Classic: A-level stream and main route to HE/University. 35% of pupils nationally (13% non-nationals)

Technical: Different routes within this, leading to specific qualifications and job progression. 50% of pupils nationally (37% non-nationals)

Modular: Basic entry level of compulsory secondary education with possible progression routes to technical streams. 15% of pupils nationally (60% non-nationals)

There is the view that this is a good system for the “bright” students. Middle ability pupils will find their way, but lower ability can experience difficulties with system. Rigidity can mean that it is easy to go down but more difficult to climb up e.g. from Technical to Classic. The curriculum of the latter is more theoretical, with strong languages focus. There can be pressure from parents to re-sit latter years of primary school (levels 5 & 6) but this is generally viewed as pointless. (It is important to stress those students without good language abilities do not excel in this system)

The school at Mersch is a component part of larger split campus across 3 sites, with companion schools in the town of Diekirch. The Annexe has 450 pupils across the 3 streams from ages 12-15 years. This includes 30 girl boarders with other issues to address. Diekirch is home to Classic/Technical school with 720 pupils from 16+, and further separate Technical school, a total of 2000 pupils overall under one director, with a staff of 250. Website: www.lcd.lu

There are 11 years of compulsory schooling in Luxembourg from pre-school (age 4) through primary to secondary. The school day starts from 8.00 am and finishes at 2.00 pm. There is an earlier pre-school option at age 3 years which is not obligatory, but offers an opportunity to learn Luxembourgish, in a fun way. Every town council must offer this provision. At age 6, pupils transfer to primary with introduction to German in the first year, with the addition of French in the 2nd year. (or vice versa). If pupils experience language difficulties at this early stage, then some consolidation

work is done before introduction of a second language. The leaving age is 15 years by 1st September. Teachers work on average 17 hours per week in school and only come in for classes. (There is a shortage of teachers). The town council manage teachers and pay for buildings.

The schools visited were of an extremely impressive standard in terms of both resources and aesthetics. The extensive wood-panelled office, complete with objects d'art and elegant furniture, of the director of the Diekirch classic school would not have been out of place in a global organisation!

The Guidance Provisions: each secondary school has a support team for pupils and parents, comprising psychologist, guidance teachers, a social worker, and an educator or educational worker. Most guidance counsellors have psychology backgrounds but no formal guidance qualification. This seems to be a generous set-up with support spanning generic education & guidance, including careers dimension (psychologist), learning support (educator), guidance teacher (narrower remit revolving around specific items e.g. work experience). .

The Referral system: There is on-going voluntary self-referral; if a young person self-refers Jean-Jacques has a policy to see them within three days of their request wherever possible. However, there is also an assessment at the end of each term by school, looking at the needs and issues of every pupil, with parents contacted and invited to consult. Parents evenings are regarded as high priority, with at least one parents evening per term. These evenings can go on until midnight sometimes! Informal contact throughout term for pupils and parents is also encouraged and valued. Guidance appears to be fairly directive.

Tuesday

VIST TO CENTRE de DOCUMENTATION et D'INFORMATION SUR

L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR (CEDIES) : This is the centre which deals with higher Education and post secondary options, providing careers information and support for HE studies in Luxembourg and abroad. There is a very limited range of courses and options within Luxembourg itself with only one University, which mainly offers post-graduate courses and some diploma level courses e.g. teaching. As a consequence, nearly all Luxembourg undergraduates study abroad. The centre is a key information source on options and funding support, as well as offering advice and guidance. It is essential, therefore, that they keep abreast of developments and change. They hold prospectuses/ information on HE institutions world-wide, and publish comprehensive study guides by country e.g. HE in the UK. They deal with approximately 30 clients per day after Baccalaureate. Approximately 25% of school pupils progress to University, with the majority going to neighbouring countries but also world-wide. France is popular for Law degrees, with Germany attracting Engineering students. Many students will choose to return to Luxembourg on graduation but this may depend on discipline and labour market

There are two funding strands: Scholarship and Loan. The former is primarily based on need and social criteria factors but everyone is entitled to apply for a bank loan at 2% interest from the Luxembourg government, which is means-tested. Application for funding requires individuals to hold Baccalaureate from Luxembourg or equivalent, meet residency criteria and have a place at a recognised HE institution. The loan can be paid back over 10/12 years, with some graduates deferring re-

payment until financial situation and circumstances more favourable. Website:

www.cedies.lu

Wednesday

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR CONTINUOUS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

(Centre National de la Formation Professionnelle Continue) :This is a vocational training centre for young people on two year courses in trades such as construction, electrical, motor vehicle, hairdressing who have moved from Preparatory stream in school. Along with vocational training there are modules in French, German, Maths and Social Education to aid progression on to Technical regime and apprenticeship route. Again importance of languages underlined.

ADMINISTRATION de L'EMPLOI (ADEM): This is situated near the main station in Luxembourg City to support access for all clients. Their function is to provide vocational guidance for the labour market, providing information, guidance, and placing. They deliver careers education in some schools with individuals or groups in the Preparatory stream in the 12 - 15 years age range, drawing on a number of visual resources e.g. construction posters to identify different jobs and promoting teamwork, to worksheets on e.g. making a hamburger to find all jobs relating to this. Progression with young people takes them on to activities identifying, qualities, skills and competencies. With the latter, 3 levels are itemised: intellectual/academic; physical/health; and social. Some of these initiatives started off as an EU project, with uptake desired now by most schools.

Every pupil is issued with leaflets on the apprenticeships on offer and what to do next. To assist placing, ADEM writes to all employers, requiring them to state whether they can offer an apprenticeship, as it is compulsory for employers to notify

apprenticeships in advance. Young people must also engage with ADEM in seeking apprenticeships, but can also bring along an opening of their own if they have the contacts.

In 2000, ADEM started to deal with adults, averaging over 1000 per year, but this can create competition for apprenticeships. Adults attract the minimum wage, however employers are reimbursed by government for the difference in amount, to equalise the situation with young people. An employer has no obligation to employ beyond the 3 year apprenticeship, and receives subsidies and tax breaks. The unemployed are not obliged to come to ADEM but most do so. Apprenticeships are also open to adults out in Luxembourg. Most recent figures show 468 young people and 1013 adults placed. Young people are paid via the Ministry of Education and adults, the Ministry of Employment. Young people remain initially within the school system (no colleges) for theoretical aspect of apprenticeship with classes in the afternoon, and most of these conducted in German. It is possible, on completion of one apprenticeship, to access a 2nd opportunity if the initial route is not suitable or ultimately acceptable. Once again, competency in languages determines everything. ADEM highlighted difficulties with young people not prepared enough for work or holding inappropriate expectations.

NB: This is very similar to our guidance system, except it is not impartial advice more directive advice and information.

Thursday

Discussion: with social worker and Educator, on the support with social inclusion remit, for young people in the 14-26 years category offering assistance towards employment and resolution of other issues, including housing, stability issues etc.

Young people can be referred from school, appear at information centres, or come through work route, or via social workers. There is a network of offices all over the country reinforcing the *locale* element. Staff, who may have an education or social work background, offer time and space for listening, home visits as appropriate, all with a view to understanding how the person lives. As there are no state benefits until 26 years+, young people are dependant on family, and if this relationship breaks down then survival can be very difficult. With external support required, there is no financial provision for this age group and no FE colleges to progress education. This can be particularly problematic for young people who do not attain the full qualifications at school (CATP & CCM) as a platform to apprenticeships across the spectrum of jobs. *Action Locale* works with other agencies as appropriate and also receives background education and social work information as relevant.

NB: Lots in common with British social worker's, there is also a sense that this provision in part is very similar to the role of a Generic Personal Adviser (PA) working in Northumberland.

Friday

VISIT TO PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY FACILITIES, BERTRANGE:

Bertrange is a town of 6,000 inhabitants dealing with 600 school pupils who are placed, as is the norm, in a school building appropriate to requirements e.g. senior secondary, learning Luxembourgish etc. Bertrange is also home to a number of different nationalities, especially Portuguese, French and Italian. Common denominator is addressing language needs.

First step Pre-school provision (age 3) is aimed at teaching Luxembourgish, and whilst not obligatory, it has a take-up record of 75%. It was emphasised that this is not a crèche, and has 4 classes plus one teacher, one educator and teaching assistants.

Pupils progress on to a compulsory further two years of Pre-school or Kindergarten, where they are taught by graduate educators who have completed the Baccalaureate, plus two years training. In local Kindergarten there are 8 classes with, on average, 16/17 pupils, and one teacher per class. Pre-school and Kindergarten teachers have a partial education background but need additional training to be a Primary teacher.

There is also a teacher who

Specialises in teaching, Luxembourgish, to Kindergarten pupils, to help them catch up as need be. The 1st and 2nd year Kindergarten pupils are mixed in classes and the structure of their day is every morning 8.00-12.00 Monday – Friday plus 3 afternoons per week from 2.00 – 4.00.

Primary schools are divided up in to different year groups e.g. 1st and 2nd years in one building, the remainder elsewhere. In schools visited there were four 1st year and four 2nd year classes, each with a teacher, and special needs teacher. Additionally there was a support class in languages – Luxembourgish and German, and a “catching-up” class for pupils with severe learning difficulties. There is also the facility for parents to leave their children in school from 7.30 in the morning and pick them up at 5.30pm for a small charge. Meals are served in canteen under supervision and table service.

There was an opportunity to speak to the town’s Deputy Mayor, who was also our guide around the Primary School system and also an Educator of the Modular in the Ly’cee Diekirch. We had an informal champagne reception and were very kindly presented with a pen set each as a memento of our visit.

In conclusion: This was a very positive experience which widened horizons, encouraged a fresh perspective and cultivated a potential network of international

contacts. Insight to differences in structures and delivery in education and guidance services were interesting in themselves but also offered a prism through which similar services at home could be appraised. The social dimension was equally valuable and stimulating, with some opportunity also to sample the culinary and visual attractions of Luxembourg as a country.

- In comparison to Northumberland, Luxembourg seems smaller in area but with a much higher density of population. Also, the compassion of Luxembourg's international dimension in population, workforce and employment is significant, partly due to geographical location. As in Northumberland, the geographical areas are very significant to the Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) figures.
- There are no comparisons of their Educational resources in terms of buildings and facilities they are excellent with generous staff: pupil ratios. Funding does not seem to be an issue. School population is housed according to age and need e.g. both primary and secondary pupils can be in different buildings over an extensive school campus, not all in one school. The education system is very selective with streaming at an early age, lacking flexibility and not conducive to upper mobility. It may also give rise to family angst. This contrasts directly with English school systems. (there seems to be no or very few non-attendance or truanting problems)
- HE, in Luxembourg is based on mobility; the country has only one recent University so students have to travel for wider access and social inclusion. The accepted time to complete a degree course is in line with the majority of EU Countries of four years. They do not rate every EU Country's University

systems and the young person's degree has to have an official stamp of approval from the Ministry of Education, or it is not recognised.

- Generic pupil support in school is well resourced and comprehensive. However it does not seem to carry through to after school. Although there are professionals and agencies to access as appropriate. There is a strong parental influence into early adulthood. This is because in financial terms young people are dependant on their parents up to their early twenties.
- Career guidance is delivered by psychologists and is more directive, being part of a wider education focus given streamed school system. Northumberland Connexions is geared more for impartial Information, advice and guidance and seems to be much more person-centred; working in partnership with client's to give them information to make informed choices. Services also seem very fragmented for a small country,
- There is extensive and widespread use of psychometric testing (PT) which is not a feature in Northumberland, where blanket use may not sit comfortably within education ethos. However, the trend to use PT is getting more popular with schools and employers.
- Wide availability of apprenticeships with structured notification and referral procedures, which makes system and access easier and more transparent. The option of further training/apprenticeships also gives a degree of flexibility. However early leavers with basic school qualifications (2 year course as opposed to 3 year) can struggle to secure an opportunity. Stratified school system impacts on job opportunities. Modern apprenticeships are harder to locate in Northumberland, though applicant interest is evident but not always matched by opportunities.

NB It may be worth giving some consideration to the Luxembourg apprenticeship vacancy system or a variation of this.

- Ability in languages is the key to both educational and employment progress, and impacts on a whole way of life. E.g. French is used in the civil service and English is used in banking occupations. Depending on where you live determines the language spoken i.e. near the French border, and near the German Boarder to the West German Lack of language skills, notably French & German, is a significant obstacle to UK nationals seeking work in Luxembourg.

NB Finding work in Luxembourg if you become a resident can be difficult if you don't speak Luxembourgish.

Suggestions for further research:

Luxembourg has significant similarities to France, Swedish systems presented is slightly different Spain's Guidance systems are quite similar to Northumberland's and Hertfordshire's. (English) The presentations of all the delegates from the other European Countries and even the differences from North and South in the English guidance systems led us all to deliberate on the scope of comparisons available for scrutiny. The visit was too short to enable a reasonable consensus from the scant knowledge **NB:** *I use the term English guidance systems and not UK or British because guidance systems in Scotland and Ireland are slightly different.*

The one consistent point in all my findings is the problems that young people have are not dissimilar wherever they are from. The research into what works where,

why and how is a strong suggestion for all who put policy together. There was not enough time spent in the Country to make a comprehensive evaluation hence, a little flavour to maybe promote the need to look further than our own systems ...