

2. Strategies and experiences to transfer the YEP idea to the workplaces

a. Realisation

a. Acquisition of the work places (ways, criteria of selection)

After several contacts and in cooperation with the members of the LSG, the workplaces were identified. Official letters were exchanged with the directors (or owners) of these workplaces. The schools were informed of the workplace they would visit.

REAC has formulated 3 different templates for Energy Audits in: 1) office building, 2) hotel building and 3) small industry. Additionally, one questionnaire was developed for the employees' energy behaviour. This material was introduced to the teachers and the SEMTs, according to the working place which each school was due to visit.

b. Requests of the workplaces

Beside the willingness of the workplaces to contribute in the energy sensitisation and awareness of the young students, they would also like to gain some ideas for efficient use of energy and energy saving but mainly have some financial profit through changes in the energy behaviour of their employees.

Their main concern was that the work of the employees and the company not be disturbed, so they demanded an accurate work plan, and a quick – as quick as possible – intervention in their business. Additionally they requested a full and detailed report on the results and proposals.

c. Accompanying the pupils

REAC accompanies the SEMT during its first visit to the workplace. This visit is the most important (and lasts the longest) as it includes meeting with the director, the responsible caretaker of the building or the responsible engineer of the production department of the industry, and provides the students a lot of information and data for completing the questionnaires and templates they have to fill in.

From our experience, the results and conclusions of the Energy Audits and the proposals of the students will impact mainly on the energy behaviour of the employees and maybe some small, relatively cheap interventions in the building appliances.

d. Energy saving knowledge transfer

There was definitely some energy saving knowledge with two-direction transfer during the meetings (and cooperation) between the SEMTs and the responsible caretaker of the building. However, the main impact was on the energy awareness of the employees of the workplaces, during their cooperation with the students on the SEMT, especially on energy behaviour issues.

e. Experiences

This is a difficult part in Greece but seems to be successful in this case, as it involves students and companies with environmental/energy policies already established, and Public sector buildings which are very interested in helping schools' activities. Nevertheless, we should be very careful (demanding small groups of students in the SEMTs, demanding official commitments of the companies through letters, accompanying the students etc) not to create any significant inconvenience or problem during the companies' work.

f. Evaluation (Workplace Questionnaires)

After the first evaluation of the workplace questionnaires, one can identify a clear change of view on energy issues of the workplace owners and directors towards sustainability and also changes in the behaviour of the employees, after the YEP! action. There was a better understanding on energy issues and a new and increased impulse for energy guidance from employers to employees.

b. Goals

How did the student work placements affect energy efficiency practice at the places they went to?

The energy efficiency practice of the students in the workplaces was developed in three axis:

- 1) Conversation
- 2) Questionnaires (filling in and elaboration)
- 3) Presentation of results.

Through these axis the students were able to identify and focus on “energy mistakes and inefficient practices”, impacting on employees’ behaviour towards energy saving. Additionally, in some cases the students were able to identify practical measures and energy technologies which would enhance the energy efficiency of the workplaces (and in some cases present the benefits numerically).

a. Obstacles

The main difficulty was the time taken planning the action, as the students’ work schedule was already quite heavy and the work of the companies needed to be left undisturbed. Therefore, the action should be both fast and fruitful.

Additionally, the whole intervention should be presented as an important and “professional” piece of work and not as another “children’s activity”, both by employers and employees but also by the students themselves. This was quite a challenge.

b. Suggestion and Notes

1. Lessons learned

The following lessons were learned from the implementation of the project in the workplaces:

- The level of success is highly affected by the planning and organisation of the action
- Preparatory meetings and collaboration with the owners or directors of the workplaces is highly recommended for effective preparation and implementation
- The students should be prepared in advance (e.g. through the provision of suitable questionnaires and templates) before visiting the workplace
- Any support of the project’s activity from relevant Associations and Chambers are important tools and of great assistance

2. Suggestion for the future

- Dissemination of the action
- Focus on results and the proposals’ possible implementation in schools and workplaces
- Qualitative evaluation of the action
- Replication of the action even on a smaller scale