

The Coop group

Mobility for Apprentices Project and Pools – M methods

During the preparation of the mobility abroad for apprentices, we normally train them for at least two days, after having helped them first with the choice of the school and courses; and after having organized accommodation and - when possible - taken agreements for meals.

When cultural grounding starts, they have already chosen the country and the type of experience (arrangements are ready for two weeks abroad for educational purposes, within the framework of “apprentices preparation”), so the basics of the mobility abroad period are already settled.

*What they need in this context is mostly guidance for two main areas: the first one is **travelling** (indications concerning plane tickets, how to get to the airport, how to reach the final destination in case the landing airport is not in the city where they are supposed to stay for two weeks, how to reach the pension from the station, how to reach the school, etc.) and the other one is **cultural preparation**, seen as “familiarization” with the destination country, language, habits, etc.*

The “Coop” group

The “Coop” supermarkets - a huge chain whose main company is called “Unicoop” Firenze - decided to use the Mobility for Apprentices programme in order to give their workers specialized training in Spain.

The “Unicoop” group and us decided together to send 25 apprentices, divided in two groups, to Eskurtze, in the Basque Country, where Susana Martinez helped us in creating a programme fitting their needs: Spanish classes, sells simulations, visits care of other supermarket chains in Spain, meetings with professionals working in the sector, working groups and classes organized inside the warehouse of supermarkets, visits at the various commercial centres, classes of communication, marketing, etc. Not to mention visits to museums, and to San Sebastian, and trips on the river!

Cultural preparation using Pools m

For the cultural preparation of the group we’ve sent abroad in Mobility, we structured the session in a language workshop and, successively, in an “adaptation” workshop.

- **Language workshop**

The language workshop used, as stated before, some of the **language teaching methods** provided by the **Pools m** project.

We had the fortune of also having in Pistoia workplacements of students coming from Bilbao, and we asked one of them to help us use the language preparation games proposed by the Pools projects: we called the games "shoulders without wires" and "chopped sentences".

The apprentices had a lot of fun and did great in understanding.

We then also asked the Spanish student to make a an oral presentation of the city of Bilbao and worked with the students on the direct understanding of the meaning of what Silvia (the Native Spanish Speaker) said. Divided in two groups, they had a certain number of points assigned for each phase of the presentation completely or partially understood.

The last exercise was dealing with listening to a song and fill in the blanks with the Spanish words missing in the text.

Again, friendly competition between groups worked, and both of them managed to finish the exercise in record time!

Besides, they got to know each other better, and they had fun all together: the training team has been facilitated in the task of team-building by the fact that - by playing games, and listening to a song, and getting in touch to each other - the apprentices coming from different supermarkets of the same chain created and consolidated a real group ready to face his first experience abroad!

- **Adaptation workshop**

The adaptation workshop was structured as a presentation of Spanish habits:

- Tapas
- Spanish kitchen
- Wines
- Hours for the meals
- Dancing
- Music
- Culture etc.

done in Spanish language.

We asked again Silvia to help us, and then we distributed a sheet of paper of questions and possible answers (to check understanding). Afterwards discussions, questions, and exchange of opinion came naturally: the apprentices got to know Spain, and Spanish habits, and customs, and the city of Bilbao, a little better.

And they felt like they couldn't wait to get there!