



## EROVET network grows social capital

EROVET network uniting VET stakeholders around Europe fosters youth employability by providing them with Job Pool, necessary entrepreneurial competences, and what is very important – relations with colleagues, possible employers from various countries.

The concept of network is used very widely in various fields of science - social, technical and medical sciences. In the social sciences, the network is examined as connections between people or organizations, and information technologies are a means of ensuring communication. In the Oxford Dictionary, a network is defined as a group or system of connected people. It is further clarified that a network is a group of people who exchange information and contacts for professional and social purposes.

Another term is networking in the Oxford Dictionary defined as a system for trying to meet other people who may be useful to you at work. When it comes to human networks, the term social networks is used. Social networks are online and real. Most authors talk about social networking and communication on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and so on. EROVET network is based on the broader concept of a network, where a network is like a group connected by common goal – quality VET education and training and sharing common values, „speaking same language“ – internationalization, equity, tolerance. The characteristics of EROVET network may presume that it promotes the growth of social capital.

Bourdieu (1986) wrote that social capital is the totality of existing or potential resources associated with a network of mutual recognition, or in other words, membership in a group that empowers each of its members to access the values and resources accumulated in that network. Coleman (1986) saw social capital as a resource for action. He argued that social capital has its own information, norms, values, and encourages the pursuit of goals that would not have been possible without the creation of social capital.

Putnam (2001) defines social capital as networks with shared norms, values, and understanding that facilitate collaboration within or between groups. Dill (2015) also defines social capital as an intangible resource in the community and provides a comparison of social capital with the glue that unites organizations. In other words, social capital describes the quantity and quality of human relationships and the resources available through human social interaction (Lin, Cook & Burt (2001).



Individuals with a large and diverse network of contacts are thought to have more social capital than individuals with small, less diverse networks.

Foley and Edwards, defined social capital as networks and how people find what they need, through people they know to achieve their goals. Individuals can take advantage of resources available on a social network and pursue personal or organizational goals.

After analyzing the work of researchers, it can be concluded that the relations between educational institutions could be considered as a partnership if the organizations pursue common goals. Common goals could be higher student achievement, higher education quality in general leading to highly qualified and successful students and the creation of social capital. In summary, it is stated that social networks are a part of social capital.

Networks are based on cooperation. Moreover, networks have common goals. One of the goals of EROVET VET stakeholders is to develop social capital and furthermore contribute to social sustainability by bringing people together to share their knowledge, experience and turning one's knowledge or one organization knowledge into the knowledge of the whole EROVET network, assessible to all network members. EROVET network since its establishment 3 years ago has brought together many representative of VET schools, government organizations, businesses from more than 10 European countries. In the near future it will bring students together to create contacts, share experiences and values, find jobs and create their own businesses.