

Regional Network – Berlin

Annual Report – 2024

gss Schulpartner – Germany

Reporting period: January 2024 - December 2024

Overview

In 2024, the Berlin Regional Network consolidated its role as a collaborative platform bringing together schools, chambers, public agencies, NGOs and companies to improve career orientation and the transition from school to vocational education. Building on the diagnostic and design work of 2023, the focus this year shifted to piloting the three Berlin RealityChecks – CareerCraft, JobAction and Internships with Purpose (Praktika mit Sinn) – and to systematically evaluating their outcomes.

Two formal network meetings were held: in March, the three formats were presented and commitments for piloting were made; in August, the results of the first pilots were discussed, supported by structured evaluation surveys and feedback interviews. The network has matured into a practical forum for learning and decision-making. Members share responsibility for piloting, evaluation and refinement, while preparing to showcase results at the Regional Symposium in September 2024.

Introduction: Purpose and objectives

The Berlin Regional Network was created to address systemic gaps in career orientation: fragmented provision, uneven implementation across schools, weak links with companies (especially SMEs), and underused instruments such as internships and fairs.

Its objectives in 2024 were to:

- Ensure the piloting and documentation of the three Berlin-specific RealityChecks.
- Collect and analyse evidence from pupils and teachers on effectiveness, motivation and feasibility.
- Adjust formats based on real-life feedback to increase sustainability and scalability.
- Maintain stakeholder engagement through regular meetings, ensuring alignment of roles, resources and evaluation.
- Prepare for dissemination at the Regional Symposium in September 2024, which will mark a turning point from local pilots to broader transfer and uptake.

Network and members

The network draws on a deliberately diverse membership to ensure that design and delivery reflect the complexity of the school-to-work transition system. Core stakeholders include: senior and middle leadership from integrated secondary schools and special focus schools; careers advisers and practitioner teams embedded in schools; the Berlin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK) and the Chamber of Crafts (HWK); the Federal Employment Agency; representatives of the Senate Administration for Education, Family and Youth; social partners and youth service providers; as well as project partners from the Erasmus+ consortium.

This combined perspective enables the network to move beyond isolated projects and to co-create formats that make pedagogical sense in schools, operational sense for companies, and strategic sense for the city.

Third network meeting

Date & Time: 14 March 2024, 15:00–16:30

N. of participants: 6

Summary

The meeting built directly on the 2023 discussions. After a short check-in, the three Berlin RealityChecks were presented in detail:

- **CareerCraft:** making craft and technical professions tangible through realistic scenarios, short workshops and role play, with links to core subjects such as mathematics and technology.
- **JobAction:** activating pupils at career fairs via the Actionbound app, which structures encounters with exhibitors, encourages purposeful conversations and ensures follow-up.
- **Internships with Purpose:** preparing and structuring placements through a Talent Check, company previews and parental involvement, followed by guided reflection and documentation.

The network confirmed that these formats address the main challenges identified in Berlin: limited attractiveness of fairs, convenience-driven internship choices, lack of systematic preparation and follow-up, and weak school–company links. Members highlighted the added value of interest groups, lighthouse schools, and compact sequencing to enhance motivation.

Key decisions & Future milestones

- **Pilot phase launched:** All three formats to be piloted in spring/summer 2024 at selected schools, with company support brokered by IHK/HWK.
- **Evaluation plan adopted:** short pupil surveys (closed items) and teacher/practitioner feedback after each run, producing mini-syntheses for iteration.
- **Resource package:** commitment to produce standardised one-pagers, reflection sheets, safety briefings and company/parent letters.
- **Next meeting:** to be held after the first pilots, with the aim of reviewing early results and preparing for the Regional Symposium in September.

Fourth network meeting

Date & Time: 27 August 2024, 13:30–14:30

N. of participants: 8

Summary

The August meeting focused on the results of the pilot phase. Each RealityCheck was discussed using the guiding questions: what worked well, where to adjust, and what evidence to take forward.

CareerCraft: Implemented as two compact project days with a job-parcours, workshops in wood/metal, care and hairdressing, plus a gallery walk. *What worked:* strong activation, visible learning, clear curricular links. *Where to adjust:* shift from one-off days to block weeks; broaden the occupational spectrum; standardise reflection tools. *Evidence:* 100 % of pupils found it understandable, 52 % would “absolutely” recommend; teachers confirmed age-appropriateness and attainment of learning goals.

JobAction: Conducted at fairs with the Actionbound digital parcours. *What worked:* many more targeted conversations with exhibitors, active pupil engagement. *Where to adjust:* fewer tasks, more time for dialogue, reliable technical backup, stronger pre- and post-fair integration. *Evidence:* 71 % rated it “very useful”, 93 % found it easy to understand, 50 % would “absolutely” recommend.

Internships with Purpose: Involved a Talent Check, individual consultations (with parents), company previews, fair participation and a structured reflection phase. *What worked:* better matching of internships, universal placement success, visible learning outcomes. *Where to adjust:* improve scheduling with SMEs; unify templates for parent information, company briefings and reflection sheets. *Evidence:* all pupils obtained a placement; 78 % found it useful, 67 % would “absolutely” recommend.

Evaluation findings: The agreed evaluation plan proved workable. Across Berlin pilots, 77 % of pupils reported they liked the activities, 91 % considered them useful for career exploration, 98 % found them easy to understand, and 55 % would “absolutely” recommend participation. Feedback interviews confirmed that hands-on elements are decisive for motivation, that structured preparation and clear safety rules matter, and that block scheduling increases effectiveness. Teachers and practitioners highlighted the need for

standard starter kits (briefings, templates, safety notes) and institutionalised exchange formats between schools, companies and parents.

Key decisions & Future milestones

- Continue pilots in autumn 2024 using adjusted formats, particularly CareerCraft in block weeks and JobAction with streamlined tasks.
- Strengthen evaluation with consistent use of surveys and practitioner feedback, ensuring data are available for the Regional Symposium.
- Prepare Symposium (24 September 2024) as the next major milestone, where aggregated pilot results will be presented, discussed and scaled.

Conclusions and recommendations

The 2024 cycle confirms that the Berlin network has moved from conceptual design to practical implementation with measurable results. The three RealityChecks are workable, motivating and relevant, but require fine-tuning:

- **CareerCraft** should be expanded into block weeks to allow deeper learning, with a wider set of professions included.
- **JobAction** needs a stronger pre/post integration into school curricula.
- **Internships with Purpose** require standardised documentation and closer coordination with SMEs to reduce administrative burden.

Cross-cutting lessons are clear: hands-on experiences, compact sequencing, clear roles and safety protocols, and structured reflection all increase the impact of career orientation. The evaluation light approach has proven fit for purpose, delivering rapid insights without overburdening schools.

Recommendations for 2025 include:

1. Embedding the RealityChecks in regular school calendars (protected time windows).
2. Institutionalising exchange rounds between schools, companies and parents to ensure sustainability.
3. Preparing for transfer into the Erasmus+ outputs (Handbook, Toolbox, Modular Training Concept).

Fifth network meeting – Regional Symposium

Date & Time: 24 September 2024, 14:00–17:00

N. of participants: 19

Summary

The Regional Symposium at May Ayim School presented the three Berlin RealityChecks—CareerCraft, JobAction and Internships with Purpose—to a broader group of educators, employers, careers advisers and Youth Employment Agency representatives. The format combined short inputs with a World-Café on competences, preparation and the future of work.

What worked well:

- Broad validation of the three RealityChecks; participants rated them as relevant and motivating.
- Strengths of young people highlighted: motivation, digital fluency, teamwork.
- High interest in structured reflection phases and co-designed tasks linked to real workplace processes.

Where to adjust:

- Strengthen communication and coordination between schools and companies before and during placements.
- Provide clearer structures for reflection and feedback to make internships more meaningful.
- Address persistent gaps in work readiness, communication and decision-making.

Evidence:

Feedback confirmed the European approach of the project, with partners from Austria, Italy, Sweden and Germany aligning methods and evaluation. Participants committed to continue collaboration as a Berlin network.