

Ministerial visit for ectarc



Leighton Andrews, AM Welsh Assembly Government meeting with **ectarc** board and staff members, business leaders and international work placement participants.

Leighton Andrews AM, Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning visited **ectarc** on November 4th. He gained an appreciation of all that **ectarc** does to further Lifelong Learning in Wales by meeting local business leaders, Welsh participants on **ectarc's** Leonardo programme, current participants from Spain and France and members of **ectarc's** Board and staff.

Mr Andrews was impressed at the quality of vocational training provided through the Leonardo programme, which has received financial support from the Welsh Assembly Government for almost a decade.

Following an introduction to **ectarc's** background and practices given by Mervyn Phillips, President of **ectarc** and Sharon Thomas, Executive Director, the Minister heard accounts from participants who had taken part in the programme. Sarah McCall, from Carmarthen, told how she had spent nearly a year applying for jobs in Interior Architecture, having completed her degree at the Cardiff School of Art and Design in 2009. Following a work placement at Depack, an Interior Architecture company in Bordeaux, Sarah found employment with a Cardiff-based company in the same field.

"Their skills can make such a difference"

David Pinel from Llangollen-based IT firm ITPro explained to the minister how working with Spanish programmers from **ectarc** has helped to develop and grow his one-man business. "Their skill level is always very high and they can make such a difference." In return David uses his own skills to train the participants so they leave not only with work experience but also with new skills that will be useful to them in the future.

International companies such as Willacy Oil and Worldwide Marine Technology, both based in the Deeside area, see the advantage of the programme. Willacy Oil who work in the field of waste treatment for petroleum storage tanks placed a German Process Engineer and a Spanish Chemical Planning Engineer with great results.

WMT placed a Spanish and a German Market Researcher to help open their market in those countries.

Mr Andrews AM was very impressed with **ectarc's** work and successes so far and is keen to do all he can to support the programme.

Officials in his department have been working to arrange a meeting between Go Wales, **ectarc** and the

WELCOME to the first edition of FOCUS.

The aim of this newsletter is to share success stories and opportunities that the EU Leonardo da Vinci Vocational Training programme offers with the Business Community of Wales.

For over 20 years **ectarc** has successfully placed over 10,000 young people from overseas into Welsh companies. Some have stayed and taken up employment in Wales, others have returned to further develop their careers in their home country.

One of the obvious consequences of this programme is to boost employability through gaining the life skills required by today's employers in this fast changing, challenging job market. Our workforce needs to be flexible, mobile, highly-skilled and able to respond and adapt accordingly. The Leonardo programme can not only help develop these skills but also help to develop in the broader sense, personally, socially and culturally. The benefits to both employers and participants are numerous.

It has been a pleasure to witness the growth of this programme here in Wales and we hope it will continue to flourish well into the next decade.

We would welcome new companies in all sectors to join us in this exciting programme and urge you to get in touch with us NOW.

Thank you for your support.

Sharon Thomas, Executive Director

Welsh Assembly Government to identify opportunities for collaboration and funding so that we can continue to improve the quality of the programme.



Work placement participants from France and Spain

The story of Unimaq

Wrexham-based Unimaq has been working with **ectarc** for a number of years. They re-design and build beverage can printing machines and have employed industrial engineers from Spain, France and Denmark with great success. Berty de Jong, Managing Director of Unimaq explains: *"Our cooperation with **ectarc** has been very successful over the years, all the participants have done a good job but we have had some outstanding people that have really left their mark on the company. We have even employed some of them on a temporary and permanent basis."*

Roman Lozano Fernandez came to Unimaq for his International Marketing work placement 4 years ago and has not only been a permanent member of staff since then but has recently also won the prize for the **best LEONARDO experience** from Spain out of 95,000 candidates over a 15 year period.

More recently Carlos Torrijos Muñoz, a final year architectural student from Madrid joined the Unimaq team. He has been working on the development of their new offices as part of a company-wide expansion and relocation plan. He also designed an exhibition stand to be used by Unimaq and 5 other companies during an International Trade Show in Germany in 2011. Unimaq was so impressed with Carlos' work that they decided to bring him back to work for them once he has finished his final degree project in Spain. For now they will keep in touch by email and Skype to



Roman Lozano, winner of Spain's best LEONARDO experience

discuss the progress of the expansion plans.

"ectarc knows us well so they can choose the right participant for us"

Carlos will also return to meet his Welsh colleagues in Germany next year where they will be attending a business event with a stand specially designed by Carlos for Unimaq and 5 other companies. It is this kind of work that really makes a difference to a company. Berty de Jong: *"We have been working very closely with **ectarc**, always being clear on what type of people we need. As a result they got to know us very well and it has become much easier for them to choose the right participant for us."*



Exhibition stand designed by Carlos Torrijos

Willacy Oil

Sandycroft-based Willacy Oil was one of the new companies on the **ectarc** books this year. Thanks to their new Engineering Manager Lol Whelan, who has been working with **ectarc** for a few years with other companies, 2 excellent opportunities were offered for candidates from Germany and Spain.

Willacy Oil's business is in the treatment of oil and sludge produced by refineries and it is part of the Spanish Tradebe Group. Their first **ectarc** participant was Chemical Engineer David Moreno Alonso, from Spain, who had incidentally been trying to get a job with the Tradebe Group in Madrid. Newly graduated, our programme gave him the opportunity to prove himself in his 12-week work placement alongside the engineers on long term refurbish-



Lol Whelan with David Moreno at Willacy Oil

ment projects and dealing with suppliers and personal resources.

Sylvain Simo Tange from Germany came to Willacy Oil through **ectarc** in November with an established background in technical engineering in the petroleum and chemical industry. During his placement he worked alongside David and the local engineers on a HAZOP Studies project and made technical drawings of Tank Cleaning Process Equipment.

"We believe in helping and monitoring the participants to acquire further skill sets"

Lol Whelan: *"Both David and Sylvain worked closely with our engineers on 2 large projects that were completed and delivered. Their contribution and hard work ethic ensured all milestones and deliverable targets were met and customer satisfaction achieved."*

They made a real contribution to the company but Lol Whelan also finds it important to give something back. *"Each participant has had their own particular core competence that can be put to good use within the company, however we believe at Willacy Oil in helping and monitoring the participants to acquire further skill sets that can benefit them later on while working within the workplace environment on live projects."*

News on teaching placements

Each country that works with the EU-funded Leonardo da Vinci programme has a National Agency. This body looks after and distributes the funds and makes sure we all comply with the general rules set by the EU and the country specific rules set by National Agency themselves.

Since summer 2010 an important change has been made to the National Agency rules in Spain. They are now no longer allowed to accept any placements in the Educational Sector. This means that **ectarc** won't be receiving any teaching assistants from Spain anymore and that we cannot offer research placements in Colleges and Universities for participants from Spain. To make matters just a bit more complicated; some programmes run in Spain are funded differently and are therefore not bound by these rules. This does not happen very often though and we are sad to have to announce that placements for Spanish teachers and researchers will now become much fewer.

For teachers and researchers from other countries there are no restrictions given so far. Please do get in touch with us if you are looking for teaching assistants in a specific language for your school on 01978 861 514 or contact James Griffiths by email at james.griffiths@denbighshire.gov.uk



Worldwide Marine Technology

WMT's Marketing and Sales Director John Kenny found out about our programme while chatting on a bus in Brazil. His first reaction was that it was 'too good to be true', but once back in the UK he decided to find out more.



but we got out a lot more than we put in. They produced real billable work".

Later in the year they hosted 2 short placements for German market researchers who undertook an analysis on behalf of Worldwide Marine

Technology Ltd, SeaTechnik and Ian Bryant (mechanical offshore expert). Their recommendations for further actions will support the companies in making decisions on investments in new developments.

WMT hosted no less than 4 placements in 2010. A market researcher from Spain looked at business opportunities for the company in Spain and Mexico, and a Spanish Technical Draftsman got involved with various projects for technical operating and training documentation for the marine and offshore industry.

"Yes, you do have to invest some time and energy in the placements,

*"I don't understand why not more companies work with **ectarc**", John Kenny tells us. "All our experiences have been very good and we are already planning work for 2 more placements at the start of 2011".*

Life as a Host Family

ectarc uses approx. 260 host 'families' to provide accommodation for their participants. Our 'families' range from single parents, bachelors and retired couples to families with 2,4 children and a dog.

Some of our participants have never been abroad or never even lived on their own so it can be quite a daunting experience for them. On their part they can bring a rewarding personal experience to your household, a chance to make friends for life.

"All the participants who have stayed with me have given so much positive energy", host mother E W Jones from Llangollen tells us. "We have made them a part of the family and learnt about each other's culture while doing fun things together."

Hosts can choose to provide self catering or full board



accommodation. Furthermore there needs to be a private and furnished bedroom and access to washing and laundry facilities and a fully equipped kitchen if self catering.

ectarc prepare the participants for cultural differences and house rules.

ectarc pays **£60 p/w** for self catering and **£105** for full board accommodation.

We are always looking for new host families, so if you would like to know more get in touch with Mandy Jones, email:

mandy.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk or phone 01978 861 514.



Thank you for 2010

2010 has once again been a busy year for **ectarc**. 233 Participants from 5 different countries have passed through our doors ready to spend some time living the Welsh life.

We have also seen a big increase in the number of new companies working with **ectarc**, ranging from one-man bands to International Corporate Giants.

A lot of participants arrived at the same time rather than spread out through the year. This meant that we had to expand our database in search of high quality placements.

And what quality of placements they have been! The staff at **ectarc** cannot thank you enough for making such an effort for our participants.

But it has not only been us that benefited this year from the high level of skills brought in to the country. A fair number of work placements have resulted in real jobs. It is almost a try-before-you-buy concept. Host a Logistics Engineer through **ectarc** and when he proves to be able to do a good job, hire him once the placement is finished. At least that is what Wrexham based company Hi-Mark did for Sergio Hernandez.

TACP Architects, also in Wrexham, offered a temporary contract to Spanish architect Silvia Gil to complete her project after she finished the placement.

'Successful art placements in Cardiff'

We have also been successful this year in opening up the arts world in Cardiff with a very successful placement at the Washington Gallery in Penarth by the French Exhibition Coordinator Guillaume Julien.

Ana Juana de Río Mena, a Spanish Chemical Engineer, excelled at her work placement at Dow Corning, the South Wales-based Silicon Technology Company and is now a paid member of staff. The list of success stories is endless; Dorothy Perkins, Hacker Young Accountants, Sea Technik, Flintshire Communities First, Welsh National Opera, Theatr Stiwt, Cheshire DEC, Chester Stress Research Centre and many more.

So thank you all again so much, you are the people who make this life changing experience possible for our participants.

We are all looking forward to working again with you this New Year.

Come to meet us



The Glasdir Centre in Llanwrst, Conwy will be host to **ectarc**'s first Open Day on **February 16th 2011**.

From 10.00 until 13.00 existing and aspiring host families are welcome to come and meet the **ectarc** staff to learn more about the work we do and how you can become involved.

From 13.30 until 16.00 we will welcome local business representatives for a presentation about the Leonardo da Vinci programme and how our work experience programme can be of benefit to them. Refreshments will be available all day.

If you would like to join us for an informal chat you can find us at the **Glasdir Centre, Plas yn Dre, Llanwrst, Conwy, LL26 0DF**.

Directions to the venue can be found on www.glasdir.com/finding or you can email Karen.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk

Upcoming groups for 2011

These are the groups that we have planned in so far, please do get in touch with us if you are looking for a particular skill.

Start	Finish	Country	Examples of skills
07 February 2011	29 April 2011	France	Hotel receptionist, marketing, administration
21 February 2011	27 May 2011	Spain	Events management, food laboratory engineer, PR, interior design
14 March 2011	20 May 2011	Spain	Marketing, industrial engineering, electrical engineering
21 March 2011	27 May 2011	Hungary	Marketing, finance, purchasing
21 March 2011	06 May 2011	Germany	Librarians
21 March 2011	26 May 2011	Germany	Administration for the Industrial Sector
04 April 2011	09 June 2011	Germany	Administration for the Industrial Sector
11 April 2011	06 May 2011	Germany	Marketing, business admin, social work, food technology
25 April 2011	08 July 2011	Spain	To be confirmed