



**Report on BUSLeague activities
from an anthropological perspective**

Executive Summary

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BUSLeague ethnographic approach

BUSLeague is dedicated to stimulating demand for Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Skills (EE Skills) in the construction sector. In search for solutions to challenges found in existing markets for EE Skills, BUSLeague decided to put special emphasis on people. Researchers made ethnographic research principles an integral part of their work within the project. This allows them to better understand a variety of explicit and tacit aspects of everyday life of people, communities, and societies they work with throughout the project development.

Deliverable 5.3 is an outcome of Task 5.2, which is a continuation of Task 2.2 in which BUSLeague partners were trained in core principles of ethnographic research. This includes the ethical principles and the practical guidelines for key ethnographic methods such as interviewing and participant observation. Task 2.2 was therefore the first step in the context of BUSLeague ethnographic research, as providing ground for work in T5.2. Outcomes of T2.2 were reported in Deliverable 2.3, titled *Ethnographic Research Report on the recognition of energy efficiency skills* and are a reference point regarding challenges in the existing market for EE Skills as well as a source of inspiration in forming new knowledge and ideas in the outlined and related fields of interest.



Basic trainings held at Bouwmensen Oss¹. (Photo credits: Bouwmensen Oss)

Contributors to D5.2 report continued practicing the principles of ethnographic research from T2.2, observing the project's developments from start to end. This report, titled *Report on BUSLeague activities from an anthropological perspective* (D5.3), is a collection of their most relevant first-hand reflections on experiences with BUSLeague interventions. More specifically, they reflect on effectiveness and timeliness of BUSLeague project interventions, distinctively from a qualitative point of view.

¹ <https://bouwmensen.nl/vestigingen/oss/>

Research process

As noted, the report builds on methods and principles of ethnography and cultural anthropology. Project partners from Austria, Bulgaria, Ireland, France, Spain, and The Netherlands contributed reflections on their personal experience of BUSLeague interventions implemented between November 2021 and January 2023, drawing on their continuous involvement in both the development of the project as well as the implementation of the planned interventions.



*Participants of BUSLeague introduction to heat pumps and NZEB Building in Ireland.
(Photo credits: TUS)*

Within T5.2, partners were asked to continue using the ethnographic skills acquired in T2.2 but following an ethnographic research framework tailored to the T5.2. The framework included the following key steps/tasks:

- Continuously collect, organise, analyse and interpret qualitative data (e.g. observations and reflections regarding the interventions),
- Write a short article and publish it on BUSLeague social media channels,
- Select the most relevant BUSLeague interventions and evaluate them periodically,
- Write a report.

The principal goal of the framework was to encourage **continuous involvement** and collaboration of project partners with their target audiences (key stakeholders), ideally through the interventions they were planning and executing in the context of BUSLeague. By the principles of ethnographic research, **ethnographers** themselves – in this case our contributing partners – are the most relevant ‘measure’ used in the research process, translating complex qualitative and quantitative data into meaningful manageable insights. Through continuous engagement at many levels of the project activities our contributors gained a good understanding of people’s experience of the interventions, much of which are presented in this deliverable.



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Purpose and outcomes

This report highlights particular social, cultural, and material realities of the construction and renovation sector. Specifically, it highlights reflections on the intentional interventions planned and executed in BUSLeague to influence these sectors and how they succeeded and/or failed to induce the positive change intended by the project authors. The report does not analyse the full extent of planned and executed BUSLeague project interventions, but focuses on those highlighted by the partners as most relevant and impactful.

The content of this report therefore reflects the project's efforts for stimulating demand for sustainable energy skills and indicates directions in which future efforts for stimulating the market for EE Skills should be invested. Experience gained in BUSLeague interventions presents ground for a deeper understanding of the construction and renovation sectors, and the reflections collected in D5.3 present a valuable reference point for planning of future interventions targeted at specific goals.



The certificate issued by IVE & FEVEC for candidates that successfully passed the test.

Report structure

In-depth overview of the report's purpose and content can be found in the **introductory chapter** (Chapter 1), which also includes a more detailed section on the research method, T5.2 research framework, and the reporting process. Readers interested in the **general overview of T5.2 outcomes** are advised to read the **analysis** (Chapter 2), which is segmented into five main categories – (1) the types of interventions referenced, (2) barriers and challenges addressed, (3) timeliness and effectiveness of the interventions, (4) implications for dissemination, and (5) implications for exploitations. Each of these segments is designed to highlight commonalities and particularities of work done in BUSLeague, indicating which aspects of the analysed interventions are common to several partners, and which of them are particular for the individual partner country. Readers interested in more **detailed ethnographic reflections** on BUSLeague interventions for individual countries participating in BUSLeague should focus on the **Annexes** (Chapter 3) of the report.

Key outcomes

The types of interventions referenced by project partners are (1) trainings, (2) recognition of professional competences, (3) Campaigns, publications & participation at fairs, and (4) stakeholder engagements & workshops.



On-site skills recognition in action. (Photo credits: IVE)

These interventions addressed a number of **barriers and challenges**. Several barriers and challenges referenced as addressed through BUSLeague interventions have been identified at the beginning of the project, through work done in T2.2, yet a number of previously unidentified barriers have also been addressed. Most significantly perhaps, individual barriers and challenges that were identified at the beginning of the project and later referenced as addressed by at least half of project partners include:

- Lack of knowledge and awareness, particularly the aspect of understanding the (basic/key) concepts and notions;
- Lack of available (skilled) workforce;
- Lack of quality training opportunities;
- Lack of demand for upskilling & skills recognition, particularly due to the lack of relevant knowledge and awareness on the side of the suppliers of construction and renovation services as well as the lack of motivation;
- Various contextual factors on the side of the suppliers of construction and renovation services;
- Policy and regulation as a barrier, particularly in the aspects of lack of political willingness and lack of knowledge and expertise;
- Lack of financial instruments and incentives.



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Most of the referenced interventions have been reported as very **timely** and either very or at least somewhat **effective**, while reports of untimely and/or ineffective interventions are in minority. Among the frequently referenced factors that contributed to positive assessment of timeliness and effectiveness are:

- Large numbers of participants in interventions/activities;
- Proactive engagement and positive evaluation following the interventions by the participants;
- Market trends and needs;
- Alignment of interventions with the participants' patterns and/or principles of work.



Transition year students in a Visual Reality retrofit training in Ireland. (Photo credits: TUS)

Among the frequently referenced negative factors that contributed to negative assessment of timeliness and effectiveness are:

- COVID-19 restrictions and impacts;
- Hierarchies and complexities of institutional/business structures and processes;
- Lack of motivation and understanding on the side of (potential) participants;
- Time constraints.

Highlighted implications for dissemination include insights valuable for sharing with the wider public, some of which include:

- Observations of different cognitive models as a factor in upskilling & the value of hands-on (practical) training;
- Observations on the impact of geopolitics;
- Observations on the challenges of hierarchy.

Highlighted implications for exploitation refer to aspects of project results which can be considered as valuable after the end of the project. Most of the listed implications are case-specific yet all of them indicate directions in which results from BUSLeague could continue to be used for further development. Some of these include:

- Research involving children;
- Training clause for public procurement tenders & legal considerations as main obstacle to action;
- Untapped potential in training DIY stores staff.

Conclusion

For BUSLeague partners, the ethnographic research provided ground for understanding value and expectations regarding working with recognized EE Skills during the project realisation. Reflections collected in this report serve as a reference point for development of similar future interventions targeted at developing the construction and renovation sectors. Implications for dissemination and exploitation of BUSLeague indicate the extent of impact and possible future developments in the area. More generally, the report provides an insight into the varied landscape of the construction and renovation sector in the EU, focusing specifically on complexities in the existing markets for EE Skills.



*Minister Eamon Ryan (left), leader of the Irish Green Party, and Benny McDonagh (right).
(Photo credits: TUS)*

More information

The full version of this deliverable can be found on the BUSLeague project website at the following link:

<https://busleague.eu/outcomes/>



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