

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION - A CASE STUDY OF LEONARDO DA VINCI PROJECT

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Abstract:

The results of the project Leonardo da Vinci VETPRO Mobility titled "The internationalization of education in WSPA" implemented at the College of Business and Administration in Lublin (WSPA) are presented in this paper. The project aimed to develop a strategy for the foreign students' education in WSPA and the activation of the academic community to transform WSPA in a multicultural university, opened to the education of students of different nationalities with different cultural backgrounds. During this project the participants have acquired knowledge of other European Union universities experiences in these fields. This knowledge has helped to formulate guidelines for internationalization of education in WSPA as a roadmap.

Keywords: higher education, internationalization, knowledge exchange, multicultural environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many reports have indicated increasing demand for higher education and students mobility, especially from Asia (Kritz, 2006), but not only (Hartman, 2011). The European Union (EU) has implemented several programs to help the process of development of higher education (Keeling, 2006). One of it is the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

College of Business and Administration in Lublin (Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości i Administracji, WSPA) is one of the significant private colleges in South-East region of Poland. It educates about 4'000 students at 8 faculties. High standards, a wide range of faculties and specialisations, high position in the rankings of Polish non-government schools and the location of the region bordering with Ukraine cause increase the interest of Ukrainian students in education in WSPA. Since 2009 students from Ukraine have been studying at several faculties in WSPA. Efforts have also been made to attract students from other Russian-speaking countries (mainly from Kazakhstan and Belarus) and to create double-diploma programs. Ukraine is a main strategic area for WSPA, especially in a situation of internationalization of higher education in Ukraine (Yuryeva, 2011).

In this respect, a very important problem for WSPA is to prepare the University for education of foreigners. Preparation has a very interdisciplinary character (Teichler, 2004). It covers areas such as education standards, technical and organizational facilities, human resources, law, culture, etc. (Altbach & Knight, 2007). The transformation of WSPA to the international university (Knight, 2004) has been supported with project "Internationalisation of education in WSPA", which allowed the acquisition of knowledge in this area.

2. GENERAL IDEA OF THE LEONARDO DA VINCI VETPRO MOBILITY PROJECT "THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION IN WSPA"

Project "Internationalization of education in the WSPA" was carried out in 2010-2011 under the Leonardo da Vinci VETPRO Mobility programme and funded by EU. The project aimed to develop learning strategies of foreigners at the School of Business and Administration in Lublin and to aware its employees of the need for activation of their effort to acquire knowledge and skills to enable the functioning of the university in a multicultural environment. This strategy will allow deeper enrolment of WSPA in the Bologna Process.

Aim of the project was achieved by acquiring the experience of other universities in the analysed area (i.e. internationalisation of education), their generalization, adaptation to operating conditions, and developing guidelines for WSPA (the road map). The project has been implemented by a group of eight experienced academics of WSPA, performing various functions in the structure of the university (dean, heads of departments, lecturers). Their task was to gain knowledge, experience and skills of training foreign students with different cultural backgrounds in European universities, their analysis and evaluation, also based on own experience in this field and knowledge of the realities of the WSPA operation in the education market.

The European experience was acquired during the three one-week internships - visits to the partner European universities: Université Pierre-Mendès-France (Grenoble, France), Universidad de Alicante (Alicante, Spain), International School for Social and Business

Studies (Celje, Slovenia). A direct result of the project was the transfer of partners' knowledge and experience in the education of people from different countries and cultural regions. The confrontation of experiences of partners having a long tradition of international training (Université Pierre-Mendès-France and Universidad de Alicante) with a younger centre (International School for Social and Business Studies) from the country culturally closer to Poland and already having considerable success in the education of foreigners, is essential element of comprehensive preparation for the construction of the project participants of this strategy.

The project enabled the acquisition of knowledge and experience on modern organizational and substantive solutions, enabling the professional education of foreigners. Their application in practice will change the image of WSPA as a university opened to students of other cultures and nationalities.

3. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE: VISITS TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN FRANCE, SPAIN AND SLOVENIA

Three visits were carried out during the project to three different higher education institutions (HEI). Their structure and content were similar for all. During these visits (as well as before and after) the team performed the following activities:

- familiarization with the culture, education system and the web site of the host university, where the internship was held (implementation of the preparatory work before visit - training sessions and self-preparation of participants);
- general familiarization with the university campus, facilities, equipment of libraries, laboratories, etc.;
- visiting the office of student services, acquisition marketing materials prepared for foreign students;
- meetings with authorities and staff of the host university (at different levels), employees of the international cooperation departments, and foreign students;
- seminars and discussions on topics related to the objectives of the project and other possible areas of cooperation;
- familiarization with the culture, behaviours and mentalities of countries and partner university staff;
- conducting team meetings to summarize internships (action after each visit).

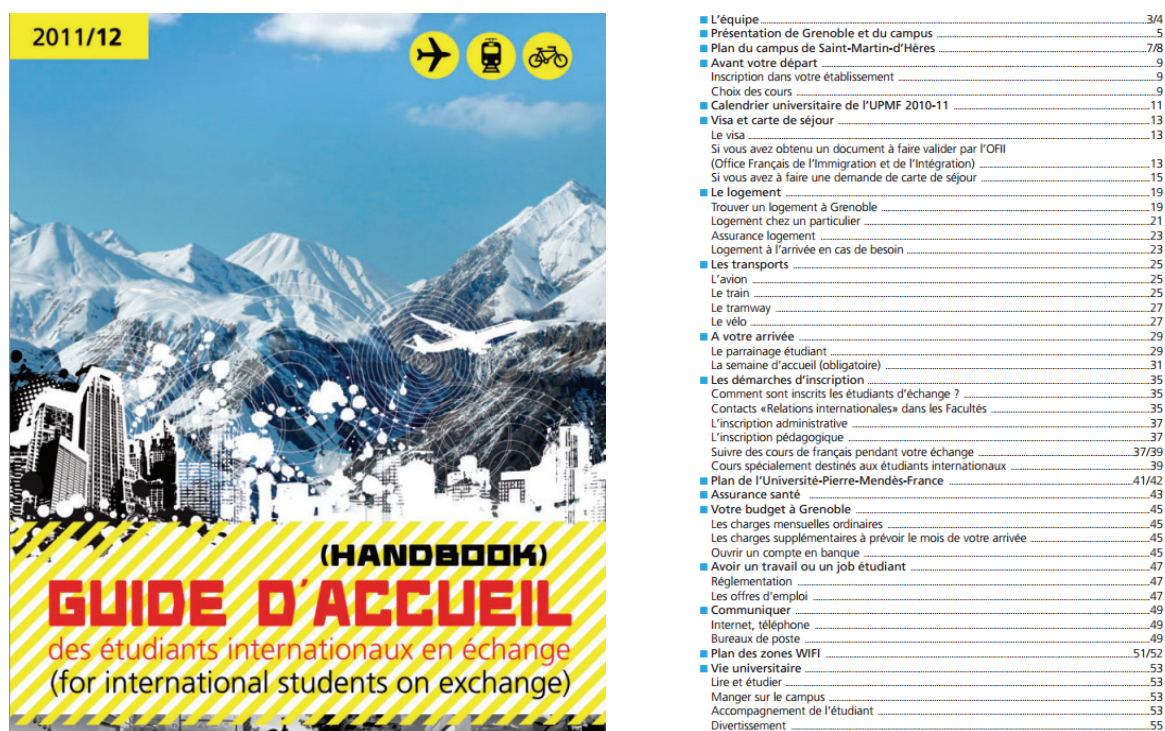
Activities related to monitoring progress and evaluation of results were also carried out during the project.

3.1. Université Pierre-Mendès-France, Grenoble, France

Université Pierre-Mendès-France (UPMF) in Grenoble (Upmf, 2012) is one of the major universities of France. It educates about 19 000 students, has more than 800 lecturers, 20 research laboratories. The study visit to this university was related to the analysis of two areas: the organization of foreigners' education (way of gaining, organizational issues) and cultural issues (teaching and cooperation within the multicultural group). The visit included a seminar in the Department of International Cooperation and meetings, conversations and discussions with lecturers and students. The University is heavily involved in international education policy: more than 3,000 students attended in the 650 exchange programs. More than 150 partnership programs are signed with many universities around the world.

Support for international students is carried out individually by each department of the University, which has special, organizationally separate unit for this purpose. Foreign students come mainly from French-speaking countries, but also there are a lot of students from Eastern Europe and Asia. They are integrated in the regular groups and assimilated with French students. The university has developed a wide program of academic, individual and staff mobility. In the university there is student association “ IntEGre” (IntEGre, 2012), offering wide support to students of international exchange and promoting cultural exchange through activities, trips, cultural events. The university has developed an extensive website through which it comes with a wide range of education offer for foreign students (Picture 1).

Picture 1: Internet guide for students on international exchange of Université Pierre-Mendès-France in Grenoble



Source: Guide, 2012.

3.2. Universidad de Alicante, Alicante, Spain

Universidad de Alicante (UA) in Alicante (University, 2012) is a significant university located in Southern Spain. It educates about 25,000 students, has more than 1,500 lecturers, and comprises more than 100 research teams. The geographical attractiveness (location on the Mediterranean), architectural monuments and a large potential in the field of science and culture attract more than 1,000 students from all over the Europe each year. Analysis of foreign students learning process concerned organizational and culture issues. During the visit, interviews with both teachers and foreign students were conducted. Management of foreign students' education at the Universidad de Alicante is centralized in one department of international cooperation - Admissions Office. The Office offers comprehensive support for students, publishes information on the Internet and in the form of leaflets. The visit in the Office allowed familiarize with ways of its operating, as well as problems that occur during servicing foreign students. These are students from South America, but also from Arab countries, and so different in relation to European culture, mentality, etc. The University is focused mainly on the education of students from Hispanic countries, who, like France, are

involved to groups of Spanish students. The university also has an extensive Web site, containing the wide range of products for international students, such as accommodation, visa support, intensive Spanish language courses, and cultural activities (Picture 2).

Picture 2: Web site of Universidad de Alicante



The screenshot shows the website of Universidad de Alicante. At the top, there are navigation links for 'ESPAÑOL | VALENCIÀ | ENGLISH |' and 'MOBILE | HELP' with a search bar. Below the header is the university logo and name. A main navigation bar includes 'UA AGENDA | DIRECTORY | LOCATION | EMERGENCIES |'. The main content area is titled 'INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES' and is divided into several sections:

- International student admissions**
 - Admission with foreign qualifications from the European Union and China
 - Entrance with foreign degrees
 - Exchange students
 - Visiting students
 - Visa
 - Accommodation
 - Alicante
- Mobility Programmes**
 - Students
 - Erasmus, Non-European International Mobility
 - DRAC, SICUE, Seneca National Mobility
 - Academic & Research Staff Mobility
 - Administrative Staff Mobility
- Oriental Studies Centre**
 - Chinese and Japanese language, culture and economy courses
 - Activities (lecturers, cinema, exhibitions, etc)
- Cooperation**
 - Cooperation to Development
 - Havana Project
 - Postgraduate Scholarships
 - AECID-PCI Projects
 - Fellowships (MAEC-AECID, Fundación Carolina, ...)
- International Training Programmes**
 - Erasmus-Training and Leonardo Programmes
- International Research Programmes**
 - SGITT-OTRI
 - International Project Management
- Language Training Programmes**
 - Spanish Language Courses for foreign students
 - A.U.L.A.S. Language Courses
 - Language Scholarships
 - Language Competence
 - Placement Test
 - Official exams
 - Translation Service
 - International Training for Administrative staff
- International Agreements**
 - Framework and Specific Agreements
- Links**
 - Servicio de Relaciones Internacionales
 - Networks

On the left side of the page, there is a vertical menu with links to 'Presentation', 'Admissions and studies', 'Research and business', 'Students', 'International programmes', 'Centres and departments', 'Libraries', 'Culture and sport', 'Services', 'Technological resources', 'Information and news', and 'University management'. Below this menu are two boxes: 'Campus virtual' (UA Intranet, teaching, management and research activity) and 'La ventanilla' (For any suggestions, complaints, proposals).

Source: University, 2012.

3.3. International School for Social and Business Studies, Celje, Slovenia

International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS) in Celje (Mednarodna, 2012) is a non-government school, which educates about 700 students in the field of management and business. Both culture and Slavic language is the most close to Poland in comparison with previous two universities. Foreign students are obtained mainly through the exchange within the Erasmus project, summer schools and degree programmes in English and Slovenian (Picture 3). There are still few, although the strategy of the university and government activity related to international educational projects (including summer schools, seminars of European lecturers, conferences, workshops, and international journals publishing) put the School in the role of regional leader of international education. International School for Social and Business Studies is preparing to open to non-EU market. Its strategy is to attract students from the former Yugoslavia.

The role of multilingual online services of universities, in which an important place is occupied by the offer for foreign students, should be emphasized. The functioning of a university, which wants to enter into a pan-European or global higher education without a proper website in the era of information age, is not possible.

Picture 3: Strategy of ISSBS internationalization

SUMMER SCHOOL 2012

Innovation in Business – Environmental Challenges

Duration: 23 June – 7 July 2012 in Celje, 1 June – 30 August in e-classroom

- Creative teaching methods in an international learning environment
- Development of participants' creative thinking and entrepreneurial innovation
- Study visits and case studies of different companies in the region
- Enjoy summer in Slovenia and make new friends from different countries

Content:

- Entrepreneurial Support Environment
- Intellectual Property Law
- Intercultural Business Communication
- New Product Development - from Idea to Innovation
- Entrepreneurship and Creativity
- Innovation Networking
- Innovation Workshop
- Simulation of Market Developments Workshop

All study materials will be available from 1 June. After face-to-face activities (in Celje), learning will continue in the e-classroom until 30 August which is the deadline for submitting the final assignment.

All students will obtain Certificate of Attendance. Final assignment is optional. Students who successfully complete their final assignments obtain a Transcript of Records with ECTS from the course Innovation in Business (6 ECTS).

Registration fee: 100 EUR (study materials, excursions, social programme)
Tuition fee: 240 EUR (final assignment is included)
Accommodation: approx. 180 EUR (bed and breakfast for 12 days)
Tuition fee and accommodation may be funded by the European Social Fund.

The operation is partially financed by the European Union from the European Social Fund. The operation is carried out under the Operative programme of the human resource development 2007-2013, development priority 3: "Human resource development and lifelong learning"; primary orientation 3.3: "Quality, competitiveness and responsible ability of tertiary education".

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2012, JOURNAL AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

Knowledge and Learning: Global Empowerment

Duration: 20-22 June 2012
Paper submission: 15 April 2012
Registration fee: 300 EUR (early registration 250 EUR, 40% discount for students and ISSBS Alumni)

In cooperation with:

- Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand
- Maria Curie Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland
- Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco

Academic Writing for Publishing Scientific Papers in International Journals

Doctoral Students' Workshop Programme with Prof. Dr. Binshan Lin
Duration: 22-23 June 2012
Registration fee: 100 EUR, 60 EUR for students and ISSBS Alumni

Twitter: @MakeLearn • More about MakeLearn 2012 at <http://makelearn.issbs.si>

International Journal of Management, Knowledge and Learning

A call for papers is open. Deadline for submission of papers for inaugural issue is 1 March 2012.

TEACHER, RESEARCHER AND NON-TEACHING STAFF MOBILITY

- ISSBS can host teachers and other staff during the entire academic year
- Teachers are usually involved in the teaching process or are in one of the research projects
- Non-teaching staff will be involved in day-to-day work

DEGREE STUDY PROGRAMMES 2012/2013

BACHELOR STUDY PROGRAMMES

- Economy in Contemporary Society (3 years, 180 ECTS)
- Business in Contemporary Society (3 years, 180 ECTS)

MASTER STUDY PROGRAMMES

- Knowledge Management (2 years, 120 ECTS)
- Management and Quality in Education (1 year, 60 ECTS)
- Lifelong Learning: Human Resource Management (2 years, 120 ECTS)

In English: A list of courses is offered in English language every year (see student mobility).

In Slovene: All programmes are offered in Slovene. Foreign students with knowledge of Slovene can enrol as full-time or part-time students (7 places in each programme). Slovene language courses are offered by many independent educational centres in Celje, Ljubljana and Maribor.

STUDENT MOBILITY - INTERNATIONAL SEMESTER 2012/2013

Period*	Study unit**	Level	ECTS
(15 January – March)	Academic Writing Skills	BA/MA	3
	Slovenian Language and Culture	BA	6
	English Language in Economics 2	BA	3
	International Economics and Business	BA/MA	9
(April – 15 July)	English Language in Economics 3	BA	6
	Entrepreneurship	BA	9
	Summer School: Innovation in Business – Environmental Challenges	BA	6

* Each period (trimester) consists of 9 weeks of lectures followed by an examination period (2-3 weeks).
** Courses are subject of annual educational plan. Some changes are possible. The list of courses carried out in 2011/12 is available on our website.

Internship:

- Internship duration is preferably from 6 to 12 weeks
- ISSBS and Slovenian companies offer internship possibilities during the entire year

In case of a bilateral agreement between the ISSBS and your higher education institution there is NO TUITION FEE for courses or internships.

Source: International Opportunities Brochure, 2012.

4. ROAD MAP OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF WSPA

As part of the project, the road map, containing guidelines for building a strategy of internationalization of education in WSPA, was developed. Internationalization of education should take into account the horizontal (implementation of the program of study at another university or implementation of joint programs: a double diploma) and vertical (completion of the second circle programme at another university) mobility of students - international exchange of students (Gacel-Avila, 2005). It should also include other areas of education in higher education: lifelong learning and postgraduate studies (Picture 4).

Internationalization strategy should include wide international cooperation of WSPA with other universities in Europe, participation in exchange programs, and international projects. It should take into account the internationalization of education in the training programs for all courses.

Picture 4: Education areas of WSPA internationalization

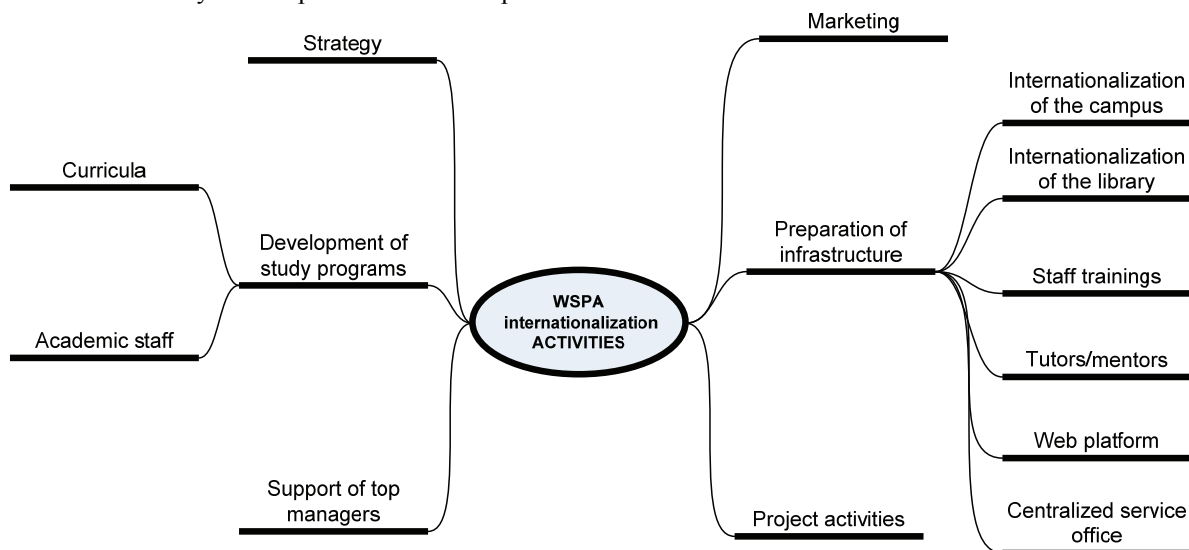


Internationalization of education should also take into account the mobility of academic staff: the international exchanges of lecturers, invited lectures, seminars of scientists and professionals from abroad. It is essential to implement appropriate organizational activities in the field of the administrative service of the process of internationalization of education, such as:

- establishing one point of centralized service for international students;
- designation of tutors / mentors of foreign students in each faculty and year;
- internationalization of the university library;
- internationalization of WSPA campus;
- preparation of a multilingual web-based platform of knowledge of foreign students;
- implementation of the integration activities of the academic community (students, staff) in the field of building personal relationships, friendships, learning about traditions, culture - meetings, trips, events, summer schools, summer courses, conferences, competitions, clubs, student sections;
- training of the staff in the field of teaching in foreign languages;
- preparing courses of Polish language and culture for foreign students;
- promoting innovation through collaboration with enterprises and innovative universities, participation in competitions, innovation projects, research and development projects;
- promoting the idea of internationalization.

WSPA activities towards the internationalization of education are complicated in nature and should be implemented in different areas (Picture 5).

Picture 5: Activity areas – part of the road map



5. SUMMARY

Project “The internationalization of education in WSPA” allowed the acquisition of knowledge from the partner universities, and using it to create a plan of development WSPA in this area. This plan was accepted by the WSPA authorities.

In addition to realisation of project aims participants has gained knowledge in the areas:

- didactic skills in the area of modern students teaching;
- functionality of web services for foreign students;

- methods of teaching students;
- organization of international conferences;
- possibilities of using e-learning in higher education;
- requirement of foreign students;
- supporting foreign students in solving current problems.

This knowledge will be used to improve the education in WSPA.

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