

Preface

This manual is part of the Erasmus+ project: European Citizenship, Heritage, Culture (EHC) whose aim it is to contribute to the innovation of learning models within the framework of Key Action: Cooperation for Innovation and the exchange of good practices.

From the jury report:

“The approach, the concept, and the collaboration make for a unique and innovative project proposal. The project might help shape the discussion in a broader setting on heritage and EU citizenship and help innovate the sector as a whole.”

The project partners did take these words from the jury as an incentive to develop an easy-to-use recipe for those educational, cultural and civic operators that are looking for new models for cross sectoral cooperation aiming at fostering European values, democracy and citizenship. This manual offers some necessary basic knowledge to consider before starting a similar initiative.

Introduction

International collaboration within higher education is seen as one of the tools for an international dimension in the fostering of the knowledge of European values and the prevention of nationalist and populist approaches. The success of the Erasmus+ project probably can be seen as the most emblematic example of successful European measurements attracting students, teachers and institutions from all 27 member states and beyond. The 2019 statistics show that 940.000 individuals have participated in 25.000 projects organised by 110.000 collaborating organisations. Several different models for international collaboration can be found on the internet. Most common are: researcher education, university-enterprise collaboration, summer universities, international organizations' activities, East-West and North-South university collaboration. These formats of international collaboration are most usually found within one shared academic discipline or professional field. Most practiced tools are: PhD programme, researcher course programme, student courses, student exchange and/or placement, university-university exchange, train-the-trainers activities, transfer and/or exchange of concepts, workshop and conferences, joint surveys and research plans, joint curricula, working groups and collaborative public events.

As one can learn from this manual, the innovation component does not lie in the chosen format: in this case that of a series of International Summer/Winter universities, but in “the approach, the concept and the choice of collaborating partners”.

Innovative elements

This manual concentrates more on the **innovative approach, the unusual concept and the collaboration** between the heterogeneous partners rather than on the detailed educational procedures and used practices, thus less on tools, customs and provisions, more on aspects of the process of international and interdisciplinary cooperation between **partners from very different fields**. In this case, that of the educational world, HEIs, as well as producers and presenters of vocational training on the one hand, and cultural and civic organisations on the other.

The partners, looking for a way to design a joint curriculum that could be described rather simply to make this format accessible to as many interested organisations as possible, came to the conclusion that the most sustainable, flexible and effective model to match the objective of the project: “the development of Innovation” is to produce a series of summer/winter schools in a campus setting with a minimum stay for participants of seven nights under the projects' mission umbrella produced

by the respective partner in collaboration with the other partners, sharing areas of particular interest.

The choice for a series of joint short courses was based on the shared conclusion that other forms of cooperation to come to a joint curriculum would mean having to interfere in running academic cycles, to convince more layers in the institution's bureaucracy and most probably would generate less possibilities to "exploit" personal informal networks in search for excellent teachers, trainers and other experts.

Not only graduate students but also professionals from all parts of civil society are welcome to join one or more courses, for some it will be part of their academic career, for others it can be an effective way to improve their career, build networks and/or improve the running policy of the initiatives and organisations they are responsible for. In all cases it helps students to show off and further develop their talents. The role of the partners, higher education institutions (HEIs) as well as private companies and educational and civic institutions is as follows:

1. Agree on the choice for the project leader who will forge detailed cooperation agreements with all involved parties: the co-producing companies, the media-partners, the donors and dissemination partners.
2. Provide a digitalized and/or paper booklet with information about the general frame for the respective courses, to be used by the partners to add their particular detailed information about their course so that students can enrol in lectures, specific working groups, excursions etc.
3. Arrange for all students a social and cultural program free of charge attended by some lecturers who can act as informal mentors and set up a schedule for smaller interactive meetings of 3 to 4 students of different professional, educational, gender and geographical background during the course.
4. Provide a site on campus with suitable infrastructure and facilities open before and after the official working hours for study, informal gathering, working groups, internet communication etc.
5. Increase the societal relevance of the course by giving students access to local and/or international civic and political personalities including staff members of the EU, Council of Europe, UNESCO etc.
6. Actively recruit students by means of spreading information, live, in print and on the web, introduced by personal introductions of the respective partner or donor.
7. ECTS will be available in cooperation with affiliated HEIs if the organising partner is not a recognized HEI itself.

The role of students is the following:

8. Interactive participation by asking questions, proposing discussion topics and taking part in group work: research and presentation.
9. Productively interact with other participants and carry out a final project that reflects their personal skills, with potential for possible recruitment and or media coverage.
10. To deliver an evaluation, ready to discuss in plenum and possibly published.

The students will be actively stimulated to analyse the presented good practices from the very beginning. For the project partners, the main incentive will be to build awareness among their students of the working environment within their immediate context. For students, it is the access to potential individuals, NGOs, businesses that are implementing active citizenship in their daily work. The project shares the EU definition of active citizenship: "participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy." (Hoskins, 2006)

The benefits of working together in EHC on a given topic already paid off as it did lead to promising practical examples of closer cooperation between partners and potential new partners and the development of new ideas, be it in the academic field, in the cultural sector, in the NGO sector, or cross sectoral. One could think of joint public debates, joint research, joint project development, publications and media productions.

The network of partners in the EHC network of summer/winter schools in short

The aim of the network is to bring together knowledge institutions (HEIs and training institutes) as well as cultural institutions in the widest sense (arts organisations like performing arts producers and presenters, festivals, heritage institutions like museums, archives, research institutes, libraries; and creative industry) with civic entities and individual personalities from the respective fields and the international political arena.

Joining the EHC endeavours means joining an educational format aiming at an interdisciplinary approach, a connection with the study and practice of European values and the analysis and development of European citizenship.

As Professor Jody Jensen, director of the Institute for Social and European Studies put it: "Until now there is not such a thing as a collaboration between universities in the fields of European Culture, (in)tangible Heritage and Citizenship. No field can be studied in isolation and requires an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach. An academic course that brings together the business skills from the regular MBA programs with knowledge from culture, European studies, tangible and intangible heritage studies and citizenship education needs to be developed."

Having agreed on the EHC's modus operandi, interested parties can join the network in accordance with the wishes of the network as will be discussed with the potential new member by the project leader. The partner should follow the shared essentials:

Partners

- The partnerships are built on personal informal working practices from previous collaborative actions.
- The partnership will be formalised in detailed partner agreements between the project leader's institution represented by the person that is also informally the leader and contact person within the project coalition and the partners institutes, represented by the person who is part of the informal preparational group of collaborating partners.

To put it clear: these type of projects will not be successful if the institutions involved are not represented by people who understand and support "the approach, the concept and the choice of collaborating partners" and like to proceed informally.

- Regular, formal and informal live meetings of the partners/ initiators are necessary.
- One single point of contact to rely on.

Venue

- The partner should provide a location that during the course will be the same every day, preferably with annex meeting space, space for social and cultural events. A central spot accessible for all involved, also after class hours. A remote small, hopefully historical meeting place would be ideal.
- The heritage component of the location provides lecturers and participants with an implicit stimulus to foster the discussions on European heritage.
- Participant's evaluations show that the quality of the staff's hospitality, be it the availability of a service desk, the lunch and dinner arrangements, the organisation of excursions and social and cultural events etc. is of utmost importance to reach the maximum quality of the interaction of all, be it teachers or students. The exchange of knowledge and networking is part of the concept.

Students

- Professionals from cultural and civic institutions as well as regular students from HEIs
- The organising partner will compile a diverse group of selected participants that takes into account, age, gender, professional background, nationality etc. to foster the intercultural capacities/competences of all.
- Set admission requirements (grade list, professional experience, motivation letter, abstract about personal ambition and results)
- Working in smaller groups as well as in plenary sessions, room for interaction should be always stimulated.

Content

The issue of "fostering European identity", EC social summit Gothenburg 2017, needs in-depth attention. Memory & history are key words here. The divergences in Europe between East and West, North and South are not solved by entering the EU. Notions of collective identities versus individual identity do ask our attention. The connection with heritage and European values needs clarification. The entrepreneurial aspect in social and cultural endeavours have to be illustrated by examples from the past until the present time. Knowledge of the MBA tools is indispensable for any successful career in the EHC field. Guest lecturers without standing experience in complex situations are to be invited.

Approach

- Multidisciplinary (divergent perspectives) and interdisciplinary (interconnectivity between the respective perspectives) integral (no topic should be discussed without including the business and entrepreneurial component)
- Working in diverse, interactive groups, organised by the students and reporting in small teams, provoking as much active involvement of the students as possible.
- A well-designed balance with unilateral moving lectures from experts with excellent didactical and performing qualities.

Teachers should have the capacity and proven experience in activating students as well as the coaching tools to guide the collective work. Teachers should be known by the organisers before being hired.

Organisers are permanently scouting new gifted talent looking for interconnectivity.