A CROSS BORDER PROJECT TO KNOW DIFFERENT WAYS TO EVALUATE COMPETENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The project called: Life Long Learning Transversalis (LLL-T), is a project within the framework of the Interreg Program POCTEFA 2014-2020 (Territorial Cooperation Program Spain - France - Andorra) by a set of 9 partners constituting a cross-border network whose objective is to harmonize and reinforce the lifelong learning practices to return the challenges of each particular region.

This project concerns on the basis of historical cooperation (TRANSVERSALIS 2009-2013) between the academic institutions and following the strategies set by the regional and national authorities, the project is committed to these themes:

- Link competences and training offer: the creation of cross-border models should be a tool for the global integration of training and mobility support systems.
- Take into account changes in business models to change training methods (alternation - apprenticeship - recognition of equivalence of professional experience): the training offer and the recognition of competences must be developed in a continuum of territories resulting in the creation of joint alternating training courses or the co-validation of cross-border diplomas by the validation of the acquired experience (VAE).
- Train the Trainers: implementation of guidance tools necessary for the success of competences acquisition course.
- Reinforce competences and inclusion within territories.
- Promote the endogenous potential, the development of training systems and the competences of people from the cross-border territory to improve access to work.

One of the most important part of this project are the competences evaluation in higher education. This article, try to describe the difference between each country competences evaluation and their methodologies.

Keywords: higher education, competences, International Project.

1 INTRODUCTION

The current scientific-technological advances are constantly influencing in the society, modifying habits, relationships and activities. In the professional field the specialization is increasing and at the same time this complexity impact to all kinds of activities, in our case training and / or competences.

Mentioned specialization affects all professions, which also affect the educational approach. In other words, the initial knowledge acquired may be lost progressively. The intellectual capital of the educational profile will reduce the effectiveness to answer to different types of activities.

In front of this situation, it will be necessary to structure life-long learning individually and collectively because many people will change work and activity more often. This situation makes us to focus on this study and research in new opportunities during lifelong learning.

The project Life, Long, Learning "LLL-Transversalis" in which our research group participate with eight other universities in the cross-border area of Spain, France and Andorra funded by the European Union through its POCTEFA program, tries to move forward within the context of these new learning proposals with the aim to promote this training during the professional life.
2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Background

Within the cross-border territorial cooperation program Spain-France-Andorra (2007-2013) -Interreg-Poctefa, a competitive call was made in which was presented a project. Participated by eight universities: Toulouse (three universities), Andorra, Lleida, Girona, Zaragoza and Perpignan. The project was carried out between 2009 and 2013.

The project was called Transversalis, had as a backbone to increase the cross-border cooperation between universities based on promoting tools (common platform for the supply of training, mobility, practices and employability, the employment of postgraduates and students, as well as training in entrepreneurship and innovation).

This project contributed to the objectives fixed in the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies and strengthened the start-up of the Bologna Process at the same time. The network of universities that was created allowed the development of cooperation actions in different areas: education, entrepreneurship, research, technological innovation and continuous training.

From the results of the project and because of the level of collaboration between universities, they agreed together with the regional and governmental institutions of these three countries to keep the work done. To achieve continuity and deepen the activities carried out, a new project proposal was proposed to present the Interreg POCTEFA Pyrenees Working Community in a future call for cross-border projects.

The researchers who participated in this project considered that it would be interesting to propose an extension through a new project and submit it to a new call of the POCTEFA.

The new proposal that was called LLL-Transversalis (Life Long Learning) and tries to expand in scope and depth the aspects already started in Transversalis.

2.2 Project structure

The proposal of the new project incorporated the following universities: Toulouse (two universities: Jean Jaures and Paul Sabatier), Girona, Lleida, Zaragoza, Andorra, Pau, the Machine Tool Institute and the University of Perpignan as a leader.

The project was proposed for a temporary duration of three years and was submitted to a competitive call for Interreg-Poctefa projects within the priority axis 5 of POCTEFA 2014-2020 - "strengthening competencies and inclusion in the territories", being accepted and counting with an approved budget of 1.8 million euros.

The project aims to work and deepen in the following areas:

- Harmonize and reinforce training practices throughout life.
- Deepen the training of trainers.
- Certification and validation of university learning.
- Dual training and cross-border alternation.
- University orientation for employment.
- Competences and management of a common cross-border space.

2.3 Objectives

Based on the stated concerns, the following objectives are set: to promote the endogenous potential, the development of training systems and the competences of people in the border territory to improve access to employment.

To achieve the general objective, the following specific objectives were proposed:

- Define an offer of cross-border professional training in terms of skills in a cross-border campus.
- Develop tools of alternation in higher education, in economic sectors of the cross-border space.
- Establish joint strategies for access to diplomas by means of certification and validation (VAE).
• Establish joint methodologies together to develop cross-border VAE (organization of mixed juries composed by teachers and professionals).

2.4 Project Actions
To properly organize and manage the project, it is divided into five main actions, each of them counting with different activities.
- Actions 1 and 2 are operational, are related to management and communication.
- Action 3.- Competences and cross-border campus network.
- Action 4.- University and professional orientation.
- Action 5.- Alternation and dual training.
- Action 6.- Formations of trainers.
- Action 7.- Validation and certification (VAE).

As we can see (figure 1) action 3 is interrelated with all other actions and is really the core of the project, since the definition of competences and the level of homogenization occupy a large part of the project activity.

Figure 1: structure of project actions and their interrelations

3 RESULTS
3.1 Activities and results
Activity 3.1. - Knowledge of the training offer. Harmonize the language used in the concept of competences [1]. This activity includes the training offered by different universities and is incorporated into the virtual campus platform created in the previous Transversalis project. It also collects the information and conclusions.

Activity 3.1.1.- Harmonize the language used in the concept of competences [3,4]. In this activity the language used in the concept of competences will be harmonized, by comparing the approaches of different competences and establishing a common model. An inventory of the occupational frameworks and associated competences in relation to the university studies offered in different sectors to be studied will be carried out.

Activity 3.1.2.-Model of description of training in cross-border competitions. Based on activity 3.1.1 a cross-border model of skills description was been developed. This model will incorporate the skills and competencies described in the academic model and highlights those that are necessary to initiate cross-border mobility [2]. In this case we selected some degrees and some master of the sectors selected.

Activity 3.1.3.-Workshops- Approach competences from different fields. In the workshops that will be carried out in the activity, they will allow those responsible for the training of each university (in the
experimental phase in the tourism, computer, mechanical and agri-food sectors). To put into practice the description of their training in competencies through the recommendations of the activity 3.1.1.

Activity 3.2.- Creation of the cross-border orientation committee. Within the activity, an orientation committee was been created to compare the different national guidelines. The committee will integrate representatives of universities, regions and the economic world to validate and work on the sustainability of the options implemented.

The final objective of the activity will be to identity the available tools based on the experiences obtained and propose an organization (administrative and legal) that allows the creation of a cross-border campus to include all the different points (figure 2) developed in this action 3.

The project activities started in January 2018 and in action 3 we are meeting the deadlines, having already completed action 3.1.2. We have compiled the competences and capacities and study plans of 4 master studies (agri-food, mechanics, IT and tourism) and the computer science degree, analyzing the standardized competences and the differentials.

At the same time, in the case of a cross-border action, it has been considered to consider competences that may have a cross-border character, employment, mobility, cultural and socio-economic.

From now on we must enter the activity 3.1.3, to classify all the competences and get a map that allows us to analyze, classify and assess the comparable competences, the differentials and cross-border. We still have not conclusions we would like to explain.
4 CONCLUSIONS

The most important activity of this project is number three related to the competences cross border and their difference. At the beginning of activity 3, we had difficulties in comparing three different university training projects.

Nowadays it has been possible to present a grid of competences, capacities and contents that allows us to advance in the workshops (action 3.1.3) to generate a comparative classification of the competences, based on an exhaustive study of the particularities and complexities of each pedagogical model of country.

The last objective of this project will be to obtain a VAE. The professional certifications are constituted in blocks of competencies, homogenous and coherent sets of competences that contribute to the autonomous exercise of a professional activity and that can be evaluated and validated. It will be necessary to start with Recommendation 2006/962/EC on key competences for lifelong learning to start with the homogenize all the competences.

There are a lot of work to continue in this investigation of this project trying to search a common point for all the components.

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