Abstract

Masaryk University places great emphasis on supporting and developing lifelong learning for all professional and age groups. It is aware of the importance of further development of lifelong learning. Therefore, it wants to focus on gaining foreign experience in preparation, stepwise realisation, and final implementation of lifelong learning programs. That is why a project called „Lifelong Learning without Borders“ was created in 2018. Masaryk University's partner in this program is the Danube University in Krems, Austria, which focuses on adult education. The aim of the project is long-term cooperation, transfer of experience, joint implementation of activities, and simultaneous involvement of both countries' participants in educational activities. At the beginning of the project, two meetings of partners, executives at various levels of management, and organizational staff dealing with lifelong learning issues took place at the University of Krems. The Czech Center in Austria is also participating in the project helping to promote project activities in both countries. The advantage of the involvement of the Czech Center is its knowledge of the environment of both countries and rich experience in promoting activities. Demonstrations of planned activities will take place in both countries as part of the project promotion. Specifically, lectures in the field of astronomy, which are intended for those interested in further education will be presented. Following there will be a joint four-day interactive bilingual course entitled „Universe without Borders“. The course topic was prepared based on a survey. The course will take place in Telč in the Czech Republic. It is intended for Austrian and Czech citizens interested in further education. The new course will serve as a template for the creation of other courses. Both project partners are involved in its preparation. Before the end of the project, the project partners will meet in Brno, the Czech Republic, where all project activities will be evaluated. The expected outcome of the project is to share the offer of activities implemented within the framework of lifelong learning programs.

Keywords: lifelong education, international cooperation, innovative forms of education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Masaryk University (MU) places great emphasis on the support and development of lifelong learning (LLL) for all professional and age groups of the population. The LLL area is being developed at MU in accordance with the World Declaration of Education for All [1], the European Union Memorandum on Lifelong Learning [2], the Lifelong Learning Strategy of the Czech Republic [3] and MU’s Long-Term Plan [4]. MU is aware of the importance of further development of lifelong learning and therefore wants to focus on gaining experience in preparation, gradual realisation, and final implementation of lifelong learning programs even from foreign countries.

The initial impetus for the emergence of cooperation and, consequently, the project came from the Austrian side. At a press conference in the Czech Center in Vienna (CC), where the activities of lifelong learning were presented, a question was raised about the possibility of long-term cooperation, joint preparation, and implementation of activities, transfer of experience, exchange of participants, or the simultaneous involvement of participants from both countries, and so on. The reason for addressing Danube University in Krems (DUK) was its focus on and experience in adult education. Danube University in Krems (DUK) is a pioneering institution in this field in Europe with the highest quality standards in research and teaching and bears the AQ Austria quality label.

The established cooperation of universities led to the realization of the project called Lifelong Learning without Borders (project number: KPF-02-082, which is financed from the European Regional Development Fund, within the Small Projects Fund project, the Interreg V - A program, Austria - Czech Republic). The Czech Center in Vienna is also working closely on the project, helping to promote the project's activities towards organizations dealing with adult education in both countries. The advantage of CC involvement is the knowledge of both countries and a wealth of experience in promoting cultural and educational activities.
2 METHODOLOGY

During preparation of the project, we relied on long-term experience with the preparation and implementation of activities realized within the framework of lifelong learning at MU. The overlap was the establishment of cooperation with a foreign partner, Danube University in Krems, which focuses on adult education.

One of the goals was to create a platform that would support the creation of mechanisms for the exchange of LLL experiences among partners, such as sharing good practice, LLL strategies at national, regional and institutional levels, communicating with senior authorities, transferring training experiences, creation, accreditation, and implementation of lifelong learning programs, obtaining the necessary financial resources, further training of lecturers, addressing the target group, effective ways of promoting lifelong learning activities towards lifelong learning organizations, those interested in further education, and the public. [5]

The target group of the project is not only those interested in further education from South Moravia and Lower Austria, aged 40 to 85, but also employees involved in adult education. In view of the possible problem with the language barrier, a translator in German was invited to cooperate. The project’s activities were designed with regard to the interest, needs, and requirements of the representatives of the target groups of both universities, as well as the rules of the program from which the project is co-financed.

2.1 Planned Activities

- PA1 - Roundtable - Leaders at different levels of management, representatives of both universities dealing with lifelong learning - two-day meeting, November 2018;
- PA2 - Discussion Forum - organizational staff of the LLL, representatives of both universities - two-day meeting, February 2019;
- PA3 - Promotion of project activities in Austria, which will present the content of the prepared interactive course in astronomy - March 2019;
- PA4 - Preparation and implementation of promotion of project activities in the Czech Republic, within which the content of the prepared astronomy course will be presented - April 2019;
- PA5 - Preparation and realization of a newly created interactive course in Telč for those interested in further education - May 2019,
- PA6 - Preparation and implementation of a one-day meeting of partners to evaluate project activities, discussion on sustainability - June 2019.

2.2 Roles and positions

To ensure smooth running of the project, the required positions, including a description of the activities in these positions, were pre-defined:

**Chief Project Manager**

- managing the implementation of the project as a whole
- coordination of activities and teams on both sides of the border
- responsibility for carrying out risk management of the whole project, continuous analysis of the project as a whole, evaluation of the project progress as a whole

**Project manager**

- project management according to the approved schedule
- ensuring the implementation of individual project activities
- ensuring project outputs
- communication with implementing bodies
- preparation of the final report
- ensuring project publicity and promotional items
• communication with partner, chief manager, and other project participants
• ensuring administration
• participation in meetings of the implementation team, meetings with representatives of target groups
• participation in the evaluation process
• manages the fulfillment of the project plan, fulfillment of results in accordance with the project budget
• monitors and controls the project plan activities
• is responsible for project documentation

Lecturer
- prepares and presents a professional lecture
- prepares and conducts course lessons - lectures and workshops
- processing of syllabi and study materials
- providing feedback to the project manager
- participation in the evaluation process

Activities implementer
• consultation of specific activities and outputs with the project team and partner
• preparation, organization, and implementation of project activities in cooperation with direct project users
• consultation and participation in the accompanying events of the project
• participation in meetings with target group representatives
• participation in meetings with the general and professional public
• communication with the manager and other project participants
• participation in project team meetings, coordination of communication processes within the partnership
• cooperation in securing project outputs

All the planned activities of the project are intended to deepen the partnership of universities - to establish closer cooperation in the field of lifelong learning, mutual exchange of experience related to the issue of lifelong learning - extension of lifelong learning programs (newly established interactive course in Telč from the field of astronomy - template for further courses), strengthening social contacts of the target groups - those interested in further education of both countries, establishing cooperation with LLL organizations, creating a cross-border network between all institutions involved and sharing the offer of activities implemented within the LLL programs.

3 RESULTS

During the project preparation, intensive e-mail and telephone communication took place between the two partners. Several personal meetings of the project implementation team took place in order to prepare the planned activities as best as possible. Communication with lecturers of the courses continued as well.

The actual implementation of the project was scheduled for November 2018 to September 2019. During the project implementation, some of the activities shifted due to the high workload of the involved workers.

The first activity for organizing adult education staff was a two-day meeting, a discussion forum held at University of Krems. Here, activities realized in the area of adult education at both universities were presented; national, regional and institutional strategies; communication with superior authorities; accreditation; fundraising; public relations; how to reach target groups; preparation, stepwise and final implementation of LLL programs; further training of lecturers, and so on.
Another two-day meeting at Krems University, a round table, was held among staff at different levels of management. Representatives of universities discussed the possibility of greater cooperation between both institutions, especially in the field of adult education - implementation of other projects, the possibility of exchange internships of staff dealing with lifelong learning issues, visiting teachers, and so on.

As part of the promotion, there were demonstrations of the project's activities in both countries, namely astronomy lectures "Destruction Comes from Space", intended for those interested in continuing education, lifelong learning organizations and the public. The content of the prepared astronomy interactive course entitled Universe without Borders was presented at lectures.

An interactive course for those interested in the education of both countries will follow, which will be piloted at the University Center of Masaryk University in Telč. The course topic was prepared on the basis of a survey among those interested in further education. The maximum number of participants was 30 - 15 (CZ), 15 (AT). For a smooth course, lecturers speaking fluently in both languages (Czech and German), an interpreter, appropriate facilities, presentation equipment, astronomical telescopes, aids and support materials are provided. The course will be bilingual, some of the activities (lectures, presentations, exercises, daytime and night sky observations) will take place in parallel, some will take place together. The new course will serve as a template for the creation of other jointly implemented courses.

Before the end of the project, a one-day meeting of the project partners will take place in Brno, where the success of all implemented project activities will be evaluated.
Figure 3. Presentation of DUK activities.

Figure 4. Lecture for those interested in the astronomical course in Krems.

Figure 5. Lecture for those interested in the astronomical course in Brno.
4 CONCLUSIONS

In cooperation with the Danube University in Krems, we have created a platform that has led to a strengthening of cooperation between educational institutions, MU and DUK, and that both at the level of the staff of these organizations as well as at the level of the target group - students. The newly created interactive course can be used to implement other courses for lifelong learning. In the following years, we plan to prepare and implement further training courses, for example, focusing on first aid training, playing musical instruments, strengthening basic communication skills, and so on. Given the interest of the target group, those interested in further education, it is more than obvious that this form of education will grow.

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