Workshop
Developing and Managing Successful Language Projects
organizat în cadrul proiectului NELLIP - Reţea de iniţiative distinse cu certificatul European Language Label (519129-LLP-1-2011-1-IT-KA2-KA2N)

Minutes

Date: 14.03.2014
Duration: 11:30 – 15:30
Organizer: Fundatia EuroEd

Section 1: Introduction and familiarization with the participants

Mrs. Anca Cristina Colibaba, as EuroEd Foundation executive president and national coordinator of the Nellip project, was the main moderator of the workshop and started the activities by presenting herself and the represented institution.

- Presentation of Fundatia EuroEd (organizational history, educational activity on European projects, etc.)

- Introduction to the auspice of the workshop, the Nellip project (presentation of the main aim of the project and topics reached)

- Presentation of the moderators (Elza Gheorghiu – language teacher and trainer, with vast experience in European project; Andreea Ionel – coordinator of the European projects department of EuroEd, with experience in development and implementation of projects)

- Presentation of the participants: 20 participants joined the workshop, from 7 different institutions (Teacher in secondary education: 5; University teacher: 12; Adult education: 1 ; Other (MA student and PhD student): 2)

Section 2: Introduction to the European Language Label

Mrs. Anca Cristina Colibaba moderated the section.

- Introduction of the topic of the workshop – Quality in language, and not all, projects in the context of the European Language Label and Erasmus+ projects applications.

- Discussions were raised concerning the priorities and focuses of the Erasmus+ new programme.

- The participants were involved in discussing about the importance of foreign languages as instrument to support the development of general competences. Creation of conditions for languages to be used in other contexts also, in the real daily life, as person or profession.

- Introduction on the European language label competition. Universities are not represented in ELL competition, only one University applied and won the award many years ago. Discussions on the reasons why Universities not get involved.

- Presentation of the history of the ELL, types of projects addressed – language projects, coordinators/ accreditors of the award, awards categories – individual and projects. The most important part was the presentation and discussions on the selection criteria. The presented criteria were accompanied by examples from projects awarded.

- Discussions on the importance of bearing in mind when developing project of the added value of the proposed project idea, of its originality and creativity and of its transferable innovation. The teachers raised the idea of the importance of transferring the knowledge in new contexts, to motivate and develop competences, in accordance with the continues changes in the society and about the role of existing multi voices to focus on development of competences through projects and not by the hard work of only one person.

- Discussions on the role of the non-formal education.

- Presentation of the national and EU priorities of ELL and details on the candidature.

- Presentation of case studies of awarded projects (universities involvement, projects ideas, concepts, approaches, activities, way of implementation, innovative elements, skills developed).

- Discussions on the ELL impact and benefits. This section raised the interest of the participants to focus more on projects. Participants shared some ideas on what impact can have on the HE education: transdisciplinarity, online support, students' motivation, innovation, cross-curricular education.

Section 3: Presentation of the Nellip project

Mrs. Andreea Ionel moderated this section

- Presentation of the project (main idea, partnership with focus on the expertise of each partner, objectives, who is addressing – the importance of having all educational categories (schools, vocational, higher and adult education), short presentation of the planned activities of the project.

- Presentation on the project website and platform

- Presentation of each section of the portal and of the history of project activities (the research activities, the process of collecting information on the awarded project and how we reached the best practices, the availability of information from many countries)

- Presentation of the resources sections, with useful links and announcements on various events. Discussions on the usefulness of the portal as being a repository of

resources and ideas of projects and successful activities which can be transferred to other contexts.

- Presentation of the Guidelines sections, with a short introduction on the aim and content of the Nellip Guidelines, with the focus and practical examples on various categories, and language availability.

Section 4: Presentation of the Nellip Guide

Mrs. Elza Gheorghiu moderated this section

- Presentation of the usability of the guide for presenting information on each step of project development.

- Presentation of the guide categories

- Discussions on what quality means. Participants were invited to share ideas (brings something new, bring an added value to the context and target group, meet needs)

- Discussions on who are the consumers (students, teachers, universities, parents, authorities and institutions from the educational field). Discussions on how to plan the target group and the importance on planning how to reach their needs. The importance on involving the target group in the project activities and in developing the project from the beginning, to be able to satisfy and motivate them according to their expectations

- Presentation of awarded projects as example on how to involve beneficiaries: "Theatergruppe Babylonia". In this project, non-German-speaking employees work together with international students at the University of Regensburg on the production of a theatre play. German language skills are developed in the many rehearsals of the play that take place. Pronunciation and syntax are rehearsed as well.

- Discussions on how to set the objectives and the results to be reached. SMART criteria.

- Discussions on how plan your project (start from an idea, set the target groups and activities, check with representatives of the target group the expected impact, plan the results, set a strong and solid management and monitoring process, plan the evaluation and feedback, count on communication, plan in details the ghant chart of implementation of the activities).

- Discussions on how to plan the activities according to the budget and human resources expertise. Discussions on the reporting system and on how to manage problems.

- Discussions on how to ensure quality on projects. Main ideas raised – coherence between activities, objectives, results and take into consideration the feedback received from the target group and integrate it in the adaptation of the resources created. The teachers also mentioned that quality should be present in their general educational activity (building the learning process as a puzzle, identify students' needs and adapt teaching, introduce innovation, evaluation and self-evaluation).

- Presentation of examples of projects. Discussion on the usage and efficiency of the CLIL method in teaching process. How to transform your teaching process in an interactive and attractive method by teaching a discipline through a foreign language.

- Discussions on how difficult is to write a project application. Most of the participants mentioned how afraid are of developing a project application, they have ideas, they know the students' needs, but is difficult to transform the ideas in proper text for the application. We discussed on the EU project management jargon – what is behind the terms used in managing projects.

- Presentation and discussions on the importance and role of the dissemination and exploitation activities within projects. Difference between concepts, for a better understanding, ways and tips on how to plan the dissemination/exploitation strategies. Sharing examples of dissemination activities and their impact.

- Discussions on the role of the networking in projects. Role of experiences exchange.

Section 5: Practical activities (development of improvement plans)

For this activity the participants were distributed in 3 groups: one group of secondary teachers, because they can share the same interest and address to the same target group; a group of HE teachers from Cuza and USAMV Universities, who decided to collaborate in elaboration of a new project idea and a group of teachers from UMF university to work on an initiative already available and to provide input for improvements.

1st group idea: Getting the foreign language teachers accustomed with the special terminology

2nd group idea: After School for preventing school dropout

3rd group idea: improvement plan for the project idea on Development of vocational language skills for international learners

Group 1 and 2 develop ideas for aim, objectives, target group, main activities, results, innovation, dissemination/exploitation activities and quality. Group 3 analysed the content

of the available project idea and worked on offering input and ideas for improving the application, by structuring the title, objectives, target groups, activities and results.

After they filled in the improvement plans the selected representatives from each group were invited to share their ideas and all the participants were invited to discuss and debate, add ideas on the projects and activities suggested.

Section 6: Online meeting (through Skype)

Andreea Ionel, explained to the participants the role and the structure of this section, saying that we will get in contact with one of the partners, from Lithuania, where they are involved in the same type of workshop and to share experiences on the aspects discussed and issues raised during the activities and to present the ideas of the improvement plans.

The connection being set Andreea welcomed the partners from Lithuania and presented shortly the team from Romania and invited the Lithuanian moderator, Olga to present briefly their group.

Then Anca Colibaba, briefly presented the activities held up to now and the ideas, remarks raised. And invited the partners from Lithuania to also share their activities and impressions. Most of the aspects presented/ discussed on both countries raised the importance and usability of guidance the teachers in applying for EU projects.

Then the representatives of the 3 groups from Romania were invited to share the ideas and the activities of the improvement plans. And Olga presented the ideas proposed by the teachers from Lithuania and discussed on the potentiality of really implementing the projects ideas, even were sent invitations for setting partnerships.

During the meeting we faced with some technical problems because of the slow internet connexion, and the participants from Romania weren't able to hear very well the Lithuanian discourse. Olga, as moderator, promised to the participants from Romania to send to them the improvement plans for evaluation and feedback.

Section 7: Feedback and Conclusions

Participants were invited to discuss on the aspects raised by the partners from Lithuania and to think on the possibility of implementing the ideas distributed. As a conclusion of the meeting the participants were invited to express their opinions and key words on what is Success in language projects:

- common interests
- knowledge of project
- feedback
- organization

- media
- utility
- addresses a group of people interested
- common language
- perseverance
- evaluation and self-evaluation
- team working with shared interests
- close relationship with partners
- visibility of the project
- attractiveness
- homogeneity
- needs analysis
- availability
- internal and external communication
- balanced relationship theory - practice
- adapting to the needs of the target group
- Reality
- strangeness project
- solving problems
- involvement and participation in decision-making
- team work
- plan and strategy for dissemination and exploitation
- managerial balance
- sustainability
- retrieval of all participants in the project agenda
- time management
- motivating the target group
- exceed targets and goals
- transfer of innovation
- creative methodologies and attractive
- innovative elements

Section 8: Nellip Network

- Andreea Ionel presented the Nellip network and its role and benefits.

- Presentation of the Facebook page and invitation of the participants to get in contact and to share ideas on the questions addressed on the page. To facilitate the collection of ideas and because of the fact that not all the participants have a Facebook account we decided to collect their answers during the workshop.

-   Presentation of the case studies on the portal and invitation of the participants to comment and share ideas on the project ideas presented.

Section 9: Evaluation

Participants were invited to fill in the evaluation form.