



Students curriculum development in the students association “Tomorrow Projects”

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“Students learn how to work in business during their study period and do not get any chock after seeing, that the theoretical knowledge and practical situations might not be the same.”

Henrika Sakiene
Head of Science and Business Centre

FAST FACTS

Country or Region:

LITHUANIA

University:

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES (SMK)

Business partners:

- Association “Tomorrow Projects”

Area of UBC:

- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

Project start date: February 2012

Project end date: On going

Keywords:

- Extra skills
- Employability
- Entrepreneurial abilities
- Collaboration
- Case study

PROJECT SUMMARY

The number of graduates, who find their places in labor market, is a very important indicator for universities, as well as for the state’s economy. For successful integration of graduates into the labour market are necessary not only professional skills, but also communication abilities, entrepreneurial skills. Standard education not always includes extra skills needed, that is why students need to have additional possibilities to get them during the study years. SMK support students with possibilities to gain extra knowledge and skills. One of the measures to reach this goal was the establishment of students enterprise (association) “Tomorrow Projects”. The possibilities of variuos activities, which the Association is providing, help students to achieve extra practical skills and improve entrepreneurial skills by implementing different projects for business enterprises and public sector organizations.

CASE STUDY IN DETAILS

Project Background and Needs

For better integration into the labour market students need to gain many additional skills. There is a significant need for self-education of young people, besides the mandatory subjects and compulsory materials, provided during the study period. SMK noticed, that students extra activities after the lectures, can significantly contribute to the achievement of better results and development of skills, which are highly valued in the labour market.

Project Solution

The idea to establish the students association “Tomorrow Projects” gave the possibilities to realize the project objectives. The owners and the members of association are and can be SMK students. The association is collaborating with local business enterprises, helping business companies with their projects, providing services, as well as participating in various exhibitions and competitions. The mentor of this project is a lecturer of SMK, whose main task is to invite students and promote their engagement into activities of “Tomorrow Projects”, as well as motivate, supply extra needed knowledge, and links to various needed information. The mentor also takes the role and responsibilities of coordinator/mediator between the Association

Key Objectives:

- To provide a “learning by doing” experience for students.
- To bring the academic knowledge to the business world and vice versa.
- To foster entrepreneurial skills of the students.
- To enhance the employability of students and graduates in a local market.

Lessons learned:

- The collaboration between students and business can be very valuable and provide a lot of resources and material, necessary for qualitative and innovative implementation of study process.
- The after lectures activities develop extra skills of students (especially soft skills).
- The role and impact of coordinating lecturer is very high in finding links between business and students.

University profile:

SMK University of Applied Social Sciences higher education institution founded in 1994. University is one of the largest private Universities in Lithuania according to the number of students and is offering non-university higher education. Institution is operating in 2 cities of Lithuania – capital city Vilnius and port city Klaipeda. The studies in the SMK are being provided in 2 languages, English and Lithuanian, covering 14 study programs.

SMK has developed a wide network of cooperation with business and social partners. University is a member of Lithuanian Business Employers' Confederation, Klaipeda chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, Klaipeda County Employers Association, Association “New generation science and business cluster”, Baltic Management Development Association.

and business enterprises, as to reach the better understanding of each other needs. The results of this collaboration give the greater value for both sides. Students receive extra information, the possibilities to study from real business cases and also contacts/recommendations for the future employment. Business companies have all possibilities to receive the solutions, based on the latest knowledge, and also “think out of box” creative ideas for solving of various problems.

Achievements and Impact

This project gives SMK the possibilities to select the team of most active, creative and brightest students from different study programs. Together with supervising lecturer they can plan and implement projects with local businesses, cooperate with graduates, participate in various competitions. The team of “Tomorrow Projects” is constantly growing, because students see the value and advantages of extra activities. Most of the elder students, who have participated in the activities of the Association, have already received work offers for the future time, when they will become graduates. The activities in this project help to develop professional skills, as well as soft skills, like team management, project management, public speaking, negotiation, selling. The best examples of students activities in “Tomorrow Projects” could be those projects, implemented together with social partners: 1) creation and development of Website for global initiative Europe Future Visioneers; 2) creation and design of visualization for the festival of Young Music (posters, diplomas, advertisements in newspapers); 3) implemented market research orders for local business companies, also research orders of product and services suppliers, as to investigate the student’s attitude towards various topics.

Project Outputs

15 students engaged, 10 projects completed in collaboration with business enterprises, the Association participated in 6 national and international competitions (in 4 of them team “Tomorrow Projects” was the winner with its ideas and presented solutions).

CHECKLIST OF PREREQUISITES TO SUCCESS

Formal aspects

- Project delivers measurable outputs (deliverables).
- Project is related to at least one strategic priority of the University.

Financial and/or Infrastructure aspects

- University invests infrastructure and/or material type (in kind) resources in the project.
- University gains non-monetary but measurable and verifiable benefits from the project.

Quote of the Business Partner:

"The team of "Tomorrow Projects" is a very valuable help for businesses, as students often are those, who can demonstrate the highest level of creativity, provide new approach and fresh knowledge."

Donatas Jonikas

Director and founder of CJSC "Marketologi"

For More Information

For more information about the case study contact Henrika Sakiene on henrika.sakiene@smk.lt

For more information about the project "FROM BRIDGING TO SUCCEEDING. University and Business Co-operation Through Success Stories." and for more case studies visit www.university-business.net

For more information about the Nordplus Horizontal programme visit www.nordplusonline.org

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Human capital aspects

- University is devoting its human capital, know-how, competence to the mutual cooperation, specifically, academic staff and administrative staff.
- Co-operation Partner is devoting its human capital, know-how, competence to the mutual cooperation.

Marketing and communication aspects

- Project and/or project results are communicated within social media channels.
- Project and/or project results are presented in trade-shows, conferences, seminars, other marketing events.
- Project and/or project results are communicated within internal marketing and/or communication channels within the University and/or Partner institution.