Mobile Bio-Class

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"The aim of the project is to take what is in science and turn it into a form accessible to 16 – 19 year old children."

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FAST FACTS

Country or Region:

LITHUANIA

University:

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY (VU)

Business partners:

- Thermo Fisher Scientific Baltics (TFSB)

Area of UBC:

- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

Project start date: 2012

Project end date: On going

Keywords:

- Bio-technology
- Molecular biology
- Hands-on education

PROJECT SUMMARY

"Mobile bio-class" is a join initiative between Thermo Fisher Scientific Baltics (henceforth – TFSB) and Vilnius University (henceforth – VU), the idea behind which is to promote bioscience among high school students. Within the "Mobile bio-class" initiative VU's students visit high-schools in Lithuania to conduct scientific experiments together with students, deliver lectures related to bioscience, have discussions, etc. Thus far, more than 2500 high-school students have been engaged in the project.

CASE STUDY IN DETAILS

Project Background and Needs

Vilnius University had been having a good relationship with TFSB even before the start of the Mobile Bio-Class project (most of the TFSB's students come from Vilnius University) and the idea about the project was a result of discussions on how to bring science to schools and make students more engaged in the subject.

Project Solution from University's side

The main responsibility of VU is to organize the trips and ensure that VU's students are well prepared to conduct the lessons and experiments with the school children. Before visiting a school, representatives of university enquire about the students that are most interested in the subject and those that would gain the most by participating (bio-class is not part of the curriculum – it is informal education). At school the 4-5 hours of experiments, lectures and discussions are overseen by students from Vilnius University, who later receive a diploma for their work.

Project Solution from Partner's Side

- TFSB has donated more than 36'000 euros worth of scientific equipment and the company also provides reagents and consumables for experiments. In addition, the new tour bus has been financed by TFSB.
- Scientists from TFSB also participate in the school visits and provide assistance through helping with the equipment and preparations for experiments.

Key Objectives:

- To get more schoolchildren interested in science.
- To provide schoolchildren with the opportunity to work with real scientific equipment.

Lessons learned:

- Without the resources of the company (in this case, TFSB's) the project would not be possible;
- Commitment on the part of university is very important. The project partner has to see that university is serious about the joint venture;
- It is useful to have alumni at the management level of companies to form new partnerships with businesses.

University profile:

Vilnius University, one of the oldest and most prominent higher schools in the Central and East Europe, was established in 1579. The University has 23 core academic and other equivalent divisions – 12 Faculties, 2 Institutes with faculty rights, 5 research institutes, and 4 inter-faculty Study and research centres. There are about 20 000 students studying at the University. There are 4 371 employees working at the University, of which 1 834 represent the teaching staff and 510 research workers. There are 1668 academic degree holders working at the University. Vilnius University is distinguished for its outstanding achievements in science and carries out fundamental and applied research in all areas of science.

Achievements and Impact

As a result of this cooperation project Faculty of Natural Sciences of the VU has managed to attract new students to study sciences and Thermo Fisher Scientific has strengthened its image as a company that is ready to invest in the development of future scientists. Furthermore, students from VU that have been visiting schools and helping children to conduct experiments have strengthened their scientific knowledge, as well as improved their people skills. There are already students at the Faculty of Natural Sciences who have as a high-school student gone through the experience of the Mobile Bio-Class.

Quantifiable Outputs for University

So far in the project:

- 100 schools have been visited;
- More than 2500 high-school students have been engaged;
- Around 50 students (volunteers) from the Vilnius University have participated in the project.

Quantifiable Outputs for Partner (s)

Since the project has started, there has been an approximately 20% increase in the number of bioscience undergraduate enrollments, which can be at least partially attributed to the initiative of Mobile Bio-class.

CHECKLIST OF PREREQUISITES TO SUCCESS

Formal aspects

- Formal practical level Co-operation Agreement is signed between University and Partner(s) which defines particular roles, outputs, reporting mechanisms and other relevant aspects.
- Clear roles and responsibilities are defined for University.
- Clear roles and responsibilities are defined for Partner(s).
- Project is related to at least one strategic priority of the University.

Financial and/or Infrastructure aspects

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

measurable and verifiable benefits from the project.

Human capital aspects

- University is devoting its human capital, know-how, competence to the mutual cooperation, specifically, academic staff, R&D staff and students.
- 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 mass media channels.
- 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.

For More Information

For more information about the case study contact Jurga Turčinavičiene on jurga.turcinaviciene@gf.vu.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