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Danube Transnational Programme

DA-SPACE

STAFF EXCHANGE

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Output 5.2 Staff exchange

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Table of Content

1	Aim of the staff exchange.....	3
2	Organizing the staff exchange process during the project's implementation.....	4
3	Summarizing the results.....	5
3.1	What has been done?.....	6
3.2	Positive feedback.....	7
3.3	Integration and use of the output by the target groups.....	7
4	Output and project/programme objectives.....	8
5	Transnational impact.....	9
5.1	Geographical coverage and transferability.....	10
5.2	Durability.....	11
6	Output integration and conclusion.....	12



1 Aim of the staff exchange

DA-SPACE – Open Innovation to Raise Entrepreneurship Skills and Public Private Partnership in Danube Region, is a project in which 7 Open Innovation Labs were established (OI Labs in Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria). In the mentioned labs, companies, public authorities, Universities and civil society were able to co-create innovation with young talents in order to achieve project's objectives. The Entrepreneurship training, as an integral part of each lab's cycle, was offered to young talents participating in the lab activities. The training provided concrete knowledge and tools to participants that could have been immediately applied in their co-creation projects. It also had a transnational approach and profit from a mutual staff exchange among the DA-SPACE partners.

Staff exchange is an output of WP5 (Entrepreneurship Training) within DA-SPACE project which clearly contributes to the project specific objective „Raise entrepreneurial skills and reduce brain drain“, as it promotes transnational exchange on entrepreneurship topics and improves quality of the entrepreneurial education within the open innovation labs. Together with the Entrepreneurship training, the staff exchange aimed to achieve a great transnational impact – concrete knowledge and tools provided within the training program with allowing a cross-border transfer of knowledge.



2 Organizing the staff exchange process during the project's implementation

The Staff exchange activity within the project was coordinated by partner responsible for the work package (Romania), but the task leader was a Croatian project partner. As a higher education institution, this project partner already has extensive experience in coordinating the staff mobility with international partners.

At the beginning of the cycles organized by Open Innovation Labs in Danube region, every lab has built the competence matrix, based on the regional plans of Entrepreneurship training with competences. The Competence matrix, as a basis for bilateral arrangements between partners, has been set up at consortium level in order to map the different expertise available within the DA-SPACE network. This matrix served to collect competences of trainers and experts involved in each region, to signalize the availability to cover partners' missing expertise, to match the final needs and offers and to import competences owned by consortium partners letting the local young talents benefit from it. Every partner involved offered at least two experts for the staff exchange. The alignment of each local labs' needs and expectations with offered input by experts was made online, with the use of shared documents and during the preparation phase of the next training edition, but also after, as an adjustment process. This preparatory activity also laid the ground for a deeper knowledge exchange in the field of entrepreneurship education among the involved institutions.

The competence matrix has been updated several times in order to adjust to the needs of each Open Innovation lab. With the use of Competence matrix and Entrepreneurship training plan, each partner should have hosted at least one expert



from another region within their training program. Through receiving an expert from a partner country, all expertises were provided within local entrepreneurship training, even if particular knowledge or methods were not available at regional level, ensuring in this way knowledge transfer on an international level.

After identifying a suitable match between sending and receiving institution, each project partner within DA-SPACE ecosystem participated in this activity in order to provide knowledge and tools from another region to local young talents.

3 Summarizing the results

In the process of staff exchange a template for this activity was used, which contained duration and period, expert's competences, needs and infrastructure needed for this activity, the language of the training module, activities provided, outcome, overall objectives and added value of the mentioned mobility. At the end of every staff exchange activity for the next edition of the Entrepreneurship Training, the proposals for improvement of the staff exchange activity were given, and the template has been updated and modified in order to make more comprehensive reports on this activity. The staff exchange form has been modified and adjusted for the improvement of the statistical analysis of the report on staff exchange. During the second edition of Entrepreneurship training, partners have used two templates per staff exchange activity – one signed form for the sending institution, and the other for the hosting institution.



3.1 What has been done?

The staff exchange within the Entrepreneurship training of DA-SPACE project involved 18 experts and trainers in total, who have offered their knowledge and innovative methods or tools to young talents among different Open Innovation Labs.

Most of the staff exchange activities were made in the mid of every cycle of Open Innovation Labs, with the average duration of 4 hours per lecture or workshop. Duration of each staff exchange activity organized within DA-SPACE project was in accordance with the duration of the Entrepreneurship Training. Depending on the regional Entrepreneurship plans of the countries involved and availability of the external experts, the dates differed from partner to partner. The lectures were mostly held in English. Each Open Innovation Lab has offered to the young talents, who participated as solvers, as many innovative methods as they could, in order to achieve objectives of the project and to enhance the transnational impact of the project activity.

The analysis of the staff exchange among DA-SPACE partners in each cycle of Entrepreneurship training consisted of period and duration data, needs for the activity, the number of experts involved in mobility, provided activities, outcomes, objectives and added value of mobility.

Regarding the results of the staff exchange activity within DA-SPACE project, there were few opportunities to improve the overall impact. For instance, in the preparation process of every edition of the Entrepreneurship training, the program should be adjusted to young talents' needs, specific defined challenges but also local ecosystem's needs.



3.2 Positive feedback

For partners, this activity presented an added value as they consider it beneficial for both, receiving and sending institution. The responses of the participants in these events were again very positive and satisfactory, as the trainings covered by external experts were well attended. Some of the innovative solutions were created through gaining the various insights or innovative learning methods provided by external experts.

3.3 Integration and use of the output by the target groups

The representative of the partners participating in this activity, staff members, but also young talents gained direct benefits. They had a chance for knowledge exchange and networking on an international level.

Exchange of practices and methods adopted in different regions was realized, involving at the same time the professional learning for the staff and opportunity to grow their network in universities or institutions abroad.

Beside the transnational impact and cross-border cooperation among Open Innovation Labs in DA-SPACE ecosystem, the overall objectives of the mobility were directed at helping the teams of young talents to improve and develop their competences and skills in the various fields with concrete tools.

Stakeholders, target groups and staff members of partners were informed about these activities through the news on institutional or organizational official websites and social media (Labs' Facebook pages).

Considering the promotion of the internationalization of companies, and the opportunity for young talents to apply for the DA-SPACE labs abroad, this output allowed a cross-border transfer of knowledge.



4 Output and project/programme objectives

Staff exchange is an output of WP5 within DA-SPACE project which clearly contributed to the project specific objective „Raise entrepreneurial skills and reduce brain drain“, as its activities promoted transnational exchange on entrepreneurship topics and improved quality of the entrepreneurial education within the open innovation labs.

There are three specific objectives of DA-SPACE project:

- Raise entrepreneurial skills and reduce brain drain
- Develop an innovative learning system for local businesses and students
- Develop common framework and tool for (social) innovation

The lectures and workshops within the Entrepreneurship training and the staff exchange activity were related to specific challenges and needs in the regions, with the final aim of raising entrepreneurial skills through the developed innovative learning system. These activities were in line with the 1st specific objective of the DA-SPACE project, respectively.

During the labs' cycles, experts from abroad educated young innovators in areas that cannot be covered by the local Open Innovation Labs, in order to strengthen cooperation among individual Open Innovation Labs and cross-border knowledge transfer. The quality of the Entrepreneurship Training has been improved through the staff exchange activity, while the needed expertise was provided in local entrepreneurship training



programs of Open Innovation Labs. The added value of the mobility was in laying the ground for deeper knowledge exchange in the field of entrepreneurship education among the involved institutions and giving the opportunity to young talents to enhance their skills. Innovative tools and methods were provided in different regions in order to enhance entrepreneurial skills among young talents.

5 Transnational impact

Transnational staff exchange among DA-SPACE project partners and its impact is one of the main added value of the DA-SPACE lab and the Entrepreneurship Training. This activity provided knowledge transfer and exchange in the field of entrepreneurship education in the Danube region.

Besides strengthening the entrepreneurial culture in DA-SPACE ecosystem, staff exchange offered an opportunity of knowledge exchange among all the actors involved. With the use of this activity, transnational component was a part of every entrepreneurship training program. All labs acted locally, but they have gathered input from experts of other Danube regions thanks to a staff exchange among DA-SPACE partners.

The staff exchange activity also targeted the priority areas of the EUSDR:

- P08 - Competitiveness, on the action of fostering cooperation and knowledge transfer between SMEs, academia and the public sector, especially by enhancing international networks



- P09 – People & Skills, through contributing to increased quality and efficiencies of education and trainings and closer cooperation between actors on a transnational level

5.1 Geographical coverage and transferability

The Staff exchange activities took place in all the countries involved as DA-SPACE project partners (Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria). The mobility of the staff among DA-SPACE project partners, in both labs' cycles, is quite simply summarized and shown through the following map (fig. 1. and fig. 2.)



Fig. 1.: Staff exchange in the 1st edition of the Entrepreneurship Training within DA-SPACE project



Fig. 2.: Staff exchange in the 2nd edition of the Entrepreneurship Training within DA-SPACE project

The good practices of this activity could be an inspiration for the further staff exchange in Danube region among higher education institutions, public institutions or SME's, but also can be implemented by other countries and regions in Europe.

5.2 Durability

The sustainability of this kind of mobility could be planned through continuation of the Open Innovation Labs' activities after the project's end, including the improvements and adjustments to regional levels. Benefits and knowledge gained through the staff exchange are shared with other staff members of partners, as a method of cross-border cooperation.

The staff exchange has contributed not only to the DA SPACE project goals achievements, but also broader, to reaching the institutional goals as stated by our university to strengthening the international collaboration, to enhancing the mobility



programs as it was also declared by the special agreement between the University of Pula and Croatian Ministry of Science and Education signed in May 2019. Internationalisation of high education is among the most important strategic goals with many activities promoted and enhanced by Croatian Ministry, particularly in the field of joint study programs, programs in English, etc. That's why there's no doubt that the University of Pula will continuously go on with staff and students exchange programs since they have the direct influence upon strategic goals realisation by our university as well as by whole high education system in Croatia.

6 Output integration and conclusion

The outcome of the staff exchange activity within DA-SPACE project was in line with the overall objectives – sharing knowledge, practices, tools and methods in order to enhance practical and professional entrepreneurial skills among young talents and cooperation between individual labs in Danube region, with the aim of creating transnational value in DA-SPACE ecosystem.

Staff exchange activity will be integrated in future activities of all Open Innovation labs, after the end of DA-SPACE project with the support of academic mobilities on the frame of european programmes Erasmus+ and CEEPUS.

As mentioned before, the most of the higher education institutions have extensive experience in staff mobility and organizing the lectures or workshops held by external experts. During the staff exchange within the project, a lot of contacts were shared among staff members of project partners, so this kind of practice to share knowledge, ideas and strengthening the international cooperation could be continued.



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There are still disparities in job opportunities, innovation capacities, percentage of the brain drain and development of the entrepreneurial culture in the Danube region. Through the use of staff exchange within the Entrepreneurship Training in DA-SPACE project, partners contributed to enhancing of the transnational knowledge exchange in order to achieve project's objectives. Gained experience should be adjusted and further used in this countries and wider, with the final aim of raising the entrepreneurship skills among young talents in Danube region.

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