

# From ESPIEW to NESPIEW: a witness about a curriculum development project life time

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## Abstract

HOWEST submitted a successful proposal to the Lifelong Learning Call for Proposals 2008. The EACEA (European Union) approved the ESPIEW Curriculum Development project proposal and selected for Community co-financing in 2008. HOWEST is since 1st October 2008 leading partner in the LLP ERASMUS Multilateral Curriculum Development Project ESPIEW.

The project is a multilateral cooperation of international partners from:

- Belgium: University College West Flanders (project co-ordinator) & Plantijn hogeschool Antwerp
- Denmark: Metropolitan University College Copenhagen
- Finland: Lahti University of Applied Sciences
- Germany: Hochschule Neubrandenburg
- Romania: University of Craiova
- Cyprus: Frederick university

## Key-words

Networking, Erasmus, International cooperation, Entrepreneurship.

## 1 “Entrepreneurial Spirit Improving European Welfare»

This project stimulates the entrepreneurial potentials of young Europeans especially in the field of Social Work and Health Care.

Most of the EU countries are going through a period of economic and demographic changes while new EU members are facing the challenges of a transforming social economy. If Europe wants to be socially and economically successful its policy has to stir competitiveness, job creation, creativity, innovation and growth. Entrepreneurship is

one of the keys to achieve those goals.

Whereas Europe needs social entrepreneurs, its education rarely succeeds to stimulate “entrepreneurial spirit”. This ESPIEW project assumes an important role stimulating the entrepreneurial potentials of young Europeans, students and graduates, especially in the field of Social Work and Health Care.

Research clearly disclose the lack of entrepreneurial development and education related to European welfare.

This project brings together creative professors and persons active in the field of social welfare, who got a knack of entrepreneurship but cannot develop this quality in their education activity. They take the opportunity to enhance entrepreneurial spirit by elaborating together a module for training students' skills and developing essential characteristics for successful entrepreneurship within a European context and based on an interdisciplinary approach. Bringing them into contact with persons having the same drive, but a different nationality and cultural background, creates an important extra value.

Entrepreneurs participate actively in this project, which focusses on theoretical and practical activities coached by experienced staff.

During the first year the project partners elaborate the course packages for the module. The second year is the period of implementation, quality control and assessment for an almost perfect final product ready for dissemination. Printed, online materials, expertise and practice in a useful module ready to be implemented in the European Higher Education.

A powerful “tailor made” interdisciplinary European Module training the skills of well-grounded future social entrepreneurs to improve European welfare.

An important extra objective is to embed the “Entrepreneurial Spirit” into the curricula of non-business higher education in Europe.

This project intends to anticipate the impact on social responsible citizens from the cooperating European countries and will activate a cross-pollination between groups of participants resulting in a upstream of the entrepreneurial spirit in the sector of European welfare.

## **2 The ESPEIW project objectives**

During the first year of the project - as planned and stipulated in the proposal - the experienced group of professors managed to elaborate a highly qualitative joint European Module by taking into account the requirements of the EU Lisbon strategy; new competences and skills have been strongly emphasized in order to reach the main objective: educate social work and health care students with the ability of using an entrepreneurial spirit in their professional way of acting.

### **2.1 Objective on student level**

The ESPIEW European Module allows students to acquire a research-based and socially oriented understanding of the entrepreneurial spirit which means “thinking” and “acting” using entrepreneurial competences in their non-business professional activities. This European Module must also contribute to increase the level of graduates in welfare education by using interdisciplinary, multinational and multicultural learning methods in order to improve the employability of young Europeans.

The ESPIEW partnership wants to meet the needs for a social and ethical dimension in society by creating a learning environment for an entrepreneurial spirit and by sharing the benefits resulting from the project. In building up a European Module based on five course packages, each multilaterally composed partner group took care of the main objectives for the students in this module to improve their entrepreneurial skills:

- identify what professional new steps can be taken to enhance entrepreneurial thinking
- leadership and management skills to improve the social responsibility within the community
- awareness of ethical problems when implementing entrepreneurship in the area of welfare
- communication and negotiation skills
- creativity and the capacity to overcome obstacles
- choose entrepreneurial strategies for turning ideas into reality by creating awareness for social market mechanisms
- create professional business planning
- determine how one differentiates between good ideas and profitable opportunities
- recognize the investments in people required to turn opportunities into realities
- understand the financial tools important to entrepreneurial success
- sustainability of entrepreneurial thinking in a high-growth context
- awareness of the impact of social institutions and instructions
- ethical awareness

## **2.2 Objective on teachers and teaching level**

The multilateral interaction between EU partners with a very divergent economic and entrepreneurial level was fundamental by the creation of a well balanced module content of high level education.

Innovation and creativity is the central component in the delivery of every course topic. The ESPIEW project is already nominated by the Danish CIRIUS group in the top ten of most creative and innovative projects in 2009 in the Nordic countries! ([www.ciriisonline.dk](http://www.ciriisonline.dk) )

All participating professors and lecturers need to be flexible in both the offering of courses to students and the essential cooperation with the other teachers. This project is clearly building bridges between creative professors and entrepreneurs active in the field of Welfare giving them the opportunity to share their knowledge, expertise and experiences.

The use of the electronic platform Dokeos for communication (Forum) , storing content and documents, etc... was of extremely high importance to succeed in reaching the aims and objectives.

The use of several pedagogical and didactic methods should guarantee a continued participation of the enrolled students during the test phase and afterwards. Based on a well balanced mix of intensive teaching linked with complex multidisciplinary assignments evoke the need for networking and creativity. The pedagogical and didactic methodology is summarized in the standard of competences per course package.

## **2.3 Objective on european higher educational level**

In the pilot ESPIEW European Module it was foreseen to enrol the students from each partner university in order to find out whether the programme really meets the needs of the globalized market and whether the module meets the aims and objectives . Only after an accurate evaluation and where necessary an adequate refining of the content and the educational approach the module will be implemented in the curriculum of social and health care higher education.

Those activities are elaborated during the second year of the projects life time.

Till now the role of the external expert, the quality manager and the management team and their use of the Prose tool for Quality Assurance and Quality Control have been of very great importance on all levels of the ESPIEW Module (content, didactics, university-business relation, etc...) and the project as a whole.

## 2.4 Objectives on education level

In the process of developing the course content in all five course packages a continuous interaction with private and public organisations took place, aimed at meeting the real needs of the European social and health market. Acting in this way the university - industry co-operation enhanced.

The main output of the European Module is to improve the entrepreneurial spirit in the area of Welfare by supporting entrepreneurial health care and social work professionals to use skills required to move an initial idea to a successful venture.

New quality standards of competences have been written out by the different course package teams . Those standards will hopefully be introduced in the higher education area of social work and health care.

Universities will be obliged to introduce into their curricula developments, new technical applications and approaches in the non-business world more quickly. The need to install good relationships with the “entrepreneurial” environment will be a key requirement for being successful on the education market.

The common project, the exchange of knowledge plus the inevitable insight into cultural and economic differences will increase the quality of education and its systems in the different EU member states. New quality standards will be introduced.

The contact with the non-academic world (the advice of experts, the cooperation of companies and hospitals, etc..) create a clear win-win situation in this project for all the parties from the different countries involved.

This European Module must contribute to increase the level of graduates in welfare education by using interdisciplinary, multinational and multicultural teaching and learning methods in order to improve the employability of young Europeans. We can very much imagine that students having acquired the competences of this course could be appointed as staff members, personal assistants to top executives and should be able to support any non-business organisation by providing entrepreneurial services at a high strategic level.

The final result will be a tailor made module ready to be implemented in the European Higher Education System of Social Work and Health Care. This new to a gradual imbedding of the “entrepreneurial spirit” into the regular curricula of non-business higher education in Europe.

### **3 The ESPIEW project approach**

During this first year of the project's life time - as stipulated in the proposal - a detailed "Project Planning" was the steering guideline for the whole elaboration of the European Module: on the one hand concerning the content and the didactic approach and on the other hand concerning a logical process of progress. The first year of the project was hard work to offer a qualitative, innovative and creative new module to the students by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2009.

#### **3.1 Didactic approach**

The central components of all course packages are innovation and creativity. All participating professors and lecturers need to be flexible in the way of offering courses, in dealing with students, and in cooperation with other teachers and professionals. It is the management team that is steering this process during the whole project process.

The management team together with all partners are aware of the fact that the module must provide opportunities for learning through lectures, presentations, workshops, case analyses, entrepreneurship simulated exercises, text readings, project work and computer conferencing with an interdisciplinary, intercultural and international approach in a practice learning based module.

Added value of the didactic approach: awakening and development of the students personal entrepreneurial skills and attitudes in a multicultural, innovative and creative international social and health environment.

#### **3.2 Project approach in the progress process**

As foreseen a management team was acting from the very first day under the supervision of the project co-ordinator and the external expert.

It was the intention and goal of the management team to have the project planning elaborated as agreed during the Berlin preparatory meeting (Jan 08) and taken down in the approved project proposal. The project co-ordinator, together with the project management team, built on a solid project structure and work planning.

##### **3.2.1 The elaboration and implementation of management documents**

The management team is closely guiding the operations by offering new documents to help and support the activities of all project partners, such as:

- the project work planning (activity plan) and responsible for task division between the partners
- the activity work plan + follow up. An spreadsheet allowing to indicate the activities

carried out by each individual partner as stipulated in the activity work plan of the project.

- the work plan checklist for partners use. A guideline for each partner to check their own activities in relation to the project's planning and the agreed engagements.
- the Standard of competence form
- the course package planning form with ECTS, teaching and coaching hours, non-teaching and coaching hours and total study load
- a document for dissemination activities per project partner
- financial documents and time sheets
- etc

### **3.2.2 The implementation and support by introducing an ICT e-platform**

After one month of activities the project manager started up an e-platform as a communication and storage tool for all project activities for all partners. Also the EACEA has admittance to the Dokeos.Espiew e-platform.

The IT tool Dokeos.Espiew e-platform contains all information and results of activities of the management team and the partners during the project's lifetime in accordance with the foreseen project plan, such as:

- needs analysis – questionnaires and results of survey
- report curriculum needs
- all necessary tools to develop the five course packages of the module : Standard of competences form and the course package planning form.

A second platform is in use for uploading the project products like the five course packages and will be accessible for the participating students in the European module.

### **3.2.3 Surveillance of the quality assurance and quality control during the project's life time**

The management team together with the external expert are continuously taking care of the quality assurance on the level of the project itself as on the module content and didactic approach. The management team is composed as agreed during the project preparation.

The management team decided to make use of the Prose-tool (<http://www.prose.be>) by implementing the methods and tools for total quality management in organisations. The existing Prose tool was especially adapted to be used for the Quality Assurance in Curriculum Development projects such as the ESPIEW project.

The external expert is making quality assurance reports on the project.

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The planned project progress is measured by comparing the achievements with the short term aims and the main aims of the project using the Prose tool.

#### **4 Budget follow-up and management**

The project co-ordinator drew up the “Agreement with An International Partner Co-operating in An International Project”. This kind of contract between Howest and the project partners refers to the contract signed with the Executive Agency and to some other administrative agreements. All Agreements were signed by the rectors, legal representatives of the different partner universities.

In order to deal correctly with the administrative and financial matters and rules of an ECDEM project, a financial project manager was appointed. This is as structured and foreseen in the project proposal.

All partners have been asked to keep records of time spent for the project, and also to use standard forms and to report on a regular basis about their expenses related to the project.

##### **4.1 Contacts and partner visits**

As the project co-ordinator, I’ve visited some of my partner institutions during the general ESPIEW meetings. During the first year, a lot of time was spent giving general information and to explain the overall view of the project.

From former international project experiences, we experienced that getting the support of responsible persons in the partner universities is an important factor to make a project successful.

Co-ordinating several Intensive Programmes and being a partner in Leonardo da Vinci Pilot projects, Tempus projects, etc...,the project co-ordinator always was aware of finding compromises and of being very flexible to deal with the differences in work attitudes and time keeping. Flexibility is crucial because dealing with partners from the whole of the EU area is an experience. Some partners are almost asking for a very close support, other fulfil their commitments in a more independent way.

##### **4.2 Organisation of two general partner meetings**

Two general partner meetings were organised by the project co-ordinator. The agenda was set up in agreement with the management team

It was quite obvious that the project co-ordinator in close cooperation with the

external expert and the management team would take care of the innovative character of the combination of the courses, the coherence of the topics, and the composition of different didactic and pedagogical methods.

Bringing the participating professors and lecturers to the same way of thinking about the European Module was a hard task but a real challenge. Besides that, the coordinator had to concentrate on the inherent coherence between all the courses, plus all the different topics of each course package. Topics of the same course are to be delivered by teachers of different universities so the problem of keeping necessary coherence was of the highest priority. During the second general partner meeting in Craiova (RO) a Coherence Group was established under the supervision of the Danish partner.

#### **4.3 The extra management and coherence meeting**

During a management meeting in Antwerp (15 June 2009) the management team found out the necessity to organise an extra management meeting before the start of the pilot module. It was decided that on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August 2009 the management team should invite one responsible teacher from each course package (sub-module) to guarantee the content quality, the coherence between all course packages en between the different partims in each course package and finely to make appropriate appointments concerning teaching methodologies, evaluation methods, next to some practical arrangements as accommodation, course time table, etc...

#### **4.4 The creation of the course packages**

As foreseen in the project proposal the partners work in different teams linked to their personal interest, expertise and experiences to produce innovative, qualitative course content. The teams are communicating through the Dokeos Espiew Forum, e-mail and telephone. During the two general meetings time was foreseen for teamwork on the course content in working groups grafted on the course packages. Regular follow-up, feedback, refining and adjustments guarantee the production of quality assured course content.

A needs analysis survey (questionnaire) was elaborated and the course packages content is worked out along the lines of its results. The answers from students and professors on this questionnaire were uploaded on the Dokeos Espiew e-platform in support of all course package working teams.

For each course package a “Standard of Competence” and a “Course Package Planning” form has to be filled in by each course package partner group.

#### **4.5 Dissemination activities**

Preparing the launch of the European module.

The management team together with the project partners have to deal with the practical requirements: recruitment, public relations and advertising, common standards between all the partners.

From the beginning it was decided that every partner should enrol a minimum of 5 students for the test phase.

As we aim at testing, evaluating and eventually refining the module, a small group is better to work within the test phase.

In the mean time, in co-ordination with the external expert, individual lecturers and professors are working out new course packages.

Dealing with timetabling, student and staff accommodation, room and equipment scheduling, enrolment procedures was the next step before the real implementation from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 at the Howest Campus in Bruges BE.

#### **5 Bringing the ESPIEW module to colleagues and students**

The management team steered the whole process of information and internal and external dissemination of the project progress and interim results. All information concerning the brand new ESPIEW European Module was brought to their university colleagues and students in order to enhance the interest in the European Module and to help motivating colleagues to introduce the entrepreneurial spirit in the regular curriculum in social and health care higher education.

Creation of:

- The link to the ESPIEW website (<http://www.espiew.eu>, the website of each partner university exposes the ESPIEW project summary and partnership (with a link to the other partner universities), an informative poster, a detailed informative Espiew brochure for students, etc...

The management team took care of disseminating the information through presentations and poster sessions at conferences, through special made PowerPoint presentations.

Each project partner had to fill in its own list of dissemination activities.

All dissemination products will continuously be updated during and after the project's lifetime to guarantee the sustainability of the ESPIEW European Module.

Added value of the project approach: facilitating the maintenance of a continuous and qualitative activity of all partners involved in the project. This includes all activities foreseen in the project proposal such as: contacts in the own university, contacts with the field of social work and health care, development of the standards of competences for each course package, development of the course packages content, dissemination, information to and selection of students, practical elaboration of the pilot module, etc.....

## 6 Project outcomes & results

Results: Dokeos.Espiew Project e-platform; Dokeos.Espiew Course e-platform; website <http://www.espiew.eu>; link on all partner websites; brochure; poster; PowerPoint presentations for dissemination; work plan; standard of competence; course packages; course packages timing; minutes and reports; Quality assurance and control via Prose-tool and questionnaires, etc....

Results on organisational level:

The Dokeos.ESPIEW e-platform.

An important outcome of the ESPIEW project is the delivery of the five course packages to start the pilot programme on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

For this purpose an e-platform was created on Dokeos from the early beginning of the project. <https://dokeos.howest.be>

The e-platform is structured in a Forum part for discussion, a Group part for work package and course package preparation, a document part, an announcement part and an agenda. Also “Announcements” from the project co-ordinator to all partners and the communication of useful e-“Links” to important informative websites next to the “Agenda” were intensively used.

The use of this platform was not that easy in a first phase because most partners were not used to this working method. After some weeks the use of the e-platform was fluent and successful using the guidelines and the helpdesk set up by the management team.

A lot of new documents were uploaded on the e-platform such as:

- documents and formats for use by all partners (activity reports, dissemination, financial reports, etc....)
  - partners task division and follow up
  - activity reports completed by the partners
  - standards of competences
  - course package planning
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- agreement of cooperation in an international project between HOWEST and partners
- EACEA information
- general meeting preparation, agenda and minutes
- questionnaires and results – needs analysis
- Interim questionnaire for quality control
- Prose quality assurance information and documents
- the ESPIEW brochure, the ESPIEW poster and PowerPoint presentations for dissemination
- dissemination reports completed by the partners
- etc.....

### **6.1 Quality assurance and quality control – prose tool.**

The ESPIEW management team and the quality manager (external expert) in agreement with the whole project partner team agreed at the general meeting in Craiova to use the Prose tool for Quality Control. The management team and the quality manager created a “quality culture” within the group of project partners.

The Prose tool develops, promotes and distributes methods and tools for total quality management in organisations. These methods are focused on quality measurement, quality assurance, and quality improvement on the basis of self-assessment. A diagnosis results automatically in the formulation of actions for improvement. The tool is compatible with the Excellence® model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), and uses self-assessment as a cornerstone in total quality management. Because of the modular construction, the tool can be used for specific diagnoses in specific units, such as the ESPIEW Project, as well as for general audits of the global organisation. PROSE has been developed in different versions and in different languages (Dutch, French, and English).

The initial existing Prose tool for quality measurement and control was adapted by the Prose team to be used for an international project in curriculum development. These adjustments were done based on the remarks and suggestions put forwards by the ESPIEW management team after deliberation during the general meeting in Craiova. By the end May the Prose tool was ready for use and the questionnaires could be filled in by the project partners who each received their own login and password. Also the EACEA received a login and password to enter the Prose Quality Control e-tool online.

The Prose e-questionnaires, especially made for the ESPIEW Project, consists of 20 questions: for each topic:

- curriculum design

- teaching and learning methods
- quality management
- quality of the CD
- open questions and remarks made by the Prose users

Results on product level:

The website.

Initially the German partner from HS Neubrandenburg created a special website for the Espiew project on: <http://www.espiew.eu> online from the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 is under reconstruction and will be again available from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010 on. That worldwide website mentioned the project summary, offered a link to the homepage of all projects partner universities and a contact address. On every website of the partner universities, a link is available to the ECDEM ESPIEW project.

## 6.2 The new developed course packages

All project partners were present at the general meetings and used the online Dokeos. Espiew e-platform during the development phase of the five course packages. Each partner contributed to the creation of the course packages in relation to its own expertise and experience. All the ECTS files, the standard of competence and the course package planning and timing are prepared, with indication of teachers, teaching and evaluation methods. According to the agreed module programme, the topics are combined in course packages.

The online courses have been developed and are available for the students on the Dokeos.Espiew Course e-platform since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009. <https://dokeos.howest.be>

Each registered student has the free access to all online course material, announcements and an own email address with a personal login and password. A large use of IT opportunities and multimedia such as e-conferencing, e-learning using internet and intranet are an integrated part of the course packages. The module provides opportunities for learning through lectures, presentations, workshops, case analyses, entrepreneurship simulated exercises, study visits, text readings, project work and computer conferencing, individual and group coaching moments with an interdisciplinary, intercultural and international approach in a practice learning based module. The course package teams constantly created a stimulating, positive and entrepreneurial learning environment structured to improve the entrepreneurial spirit and based on interdisciplinary, multinational and multicultural approach, taking care

to introduce professionals from very diverse backgrounds, nationalities and cultures. In each course package team a “Standard of competence” and “Course package programme and timing” was developed for implementation in the European Module based on a uniform document created in the Management group.

It was decided and written in the proposal that each course package would have a competence-based assessment using oral or written exams, portfolio, presentations, self- and peer assessment in relation to the course content. The testing methodology will be decided upon during the module development by each responsible per course package in agreement with the involved partners. This assessment methodology was also part of the discussions during the Craiova general meeting and the preparations during the course development period.

Provisions are taken to ensure the recognition of the European Module as part of the curriculum specified in the diploma supplement at bachelor level. The use of ECTS is foreseen and the appointed credits goes with the module programme in the brochure and poster. The amount of thirty ECTS credits will be awarded to all participating students from all institutions and countries.

Since the very beginning of the project and based on the existing networking of the different project partners, the large number of contacts with professionals, social partners, etc... (needs analysis / questionnaires) during the preparation of the course packages guide the institutions to be more responsive to employers' needs and helps employers to better understand the institutional perspective to train responsible, inventive and entrepreneurial graduates for the future. This is the growing link to the important objectives of interaction and cooperation between universities and the industry and of the improvement of employability of young graduates.

### **6.3 Result on european higher education level**

A particular interesting result is the large number of students from the different partner countries and beyond that enrolled for this first pilot version of the ESPIEW European module in Bruges starting the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009. No less than 25 students are participating. This shows the large interest for the entrepreneurial spirit and the course content in the non-business sectors of social work and health care. This interest is an important confirmation of a positive evolution to the progressive integration of entrepreneurial competences in the curricula of higher education in the area of social work and health care, being the final goal of the total project.

## 7 The ESPIEW partnerships

The consortium partnership from six EU countries was created during the Neubrandenburg Symposium concerning “The Future of Social Work and Health Care in Europe”(Sept.2007), based on the need to fill the existing gap of entrepreneurial spirit in these areas.

A multilateral cooperation of international partners from

- Belgium: University College West Flanders (project co-ordinator) & Plantijn University College Antwerp,
- Denmark: Metropolitan University College Copenhagen,
- Finland: Lahti University of Applied Sciences,
- Germany: Hochschule Neubrandenburg,
- Romania: University of Craiova,
- Cyprus: Frederick university.

The internal partnership in the project’s progress during the first year:

All delegates at the preparatory meeting in Berlin (Jan. 2008) keep their promise to actively co-operate in the development, implementation and other agreed tasks related to the multilateral Curriculum Development project.

The “list of skills and expertise of the key staff involved in the project” clearly proves the capability of the consortium to undertake the project. The management used the project planning as a basis for an spreadsheet mentioning all tasks per partner and allowing the project co-ordinator to mark the tasks carried out or not. The document is weekly updated.

The multidisciplinary project team and the high level of competence and expertise of the individual co-operators allows for the creation of the course package teams in relation to personal interest and expectancy. This is reflected in the cooperation ability to come to a number of necessary consensuses: on the content, the course package planning and timing, student recruitment and even the cooperation after the project’s life time.

The multi-country partnership provokes a precious interaction and international openness on intercultural, ethic and law principles, being the foundations of the entrepreneurial spirit for non-business workers.

### **7.1 External partnerships**

The multiple links of partner universities and professors with private and public organisations allow to evaluate the different needs to bridge the gap of entrepreneurial spirit in the areas of social work and health care in Europe. The existing external relations and partnerships open doors to invite guest lecturers to the European ESPIEW Module and facilitates the creation of experiences in the field for the students.

### **7.2 The role of the external expert**

By subcontracting an experienced external expert the project meets the general concern of the consortium to guarantee good management and the quality of the project and project's outcomes. The external expert, Mr. Ignace Ingelaere, retired in 2007 with twenty years of experience as an international coordinator at the Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven. Mr. Ingelaere possesses all necessary skills and a large experience in internationalization and higher education. His task is of high importance in the Project Management and the Quality Assurance by being the independent actor during the meetings, by preparing and evaluating questionnaire results, by giving positive impulses and stimulating to action where necessary. All partners clearly showed respect and admiration for his interventions and intellectual input.

### **7.3 The management team**

Working in a real partnership ambiance also in the management team supporting the activities of the team, guarantees the steady progress as foreseen in the project work plan.

During projects problems appeared and disappeared and up to now the consortium and management team have faced and tackled all the problems with a determined drive to solve them. All the partners are absolutely convinced of the extra value of the European module and will do their utmost to realise the final goal: a European wide module on entrepreneurship in the non-profit sector.

## **8 Conclusions after one and a half year of project progress**

The solidity of the partnership indicates that it will go on right to the end and that it will launch the European module on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 as a pilot European module.

At the beginning co-operators were more focused on all the possible problems and difficulties in the different approaches and the other ways of dealing with the same things. After the first general meeting in Finland all partners really started to look for

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solutions to get the ESPIEW module up and running.

The partnership covers a great area of the EU: covering in the North Finland and Denmark over Flanders and Germany to Romania and over Greece to Cyprus. All partners are sharing expertise and experience. Next to the project other agreements for teachers, staff and students learning and internship mobility are set up.

This partnership shows a common interest in innovation and creativity: a lot of expertise on social work, health care, social health care, welfare, wellness coaching and management, etc.....is available in all the partner institutions.

A real challenge is the cooperation between University Colleges and academic Universities with sometimes a different approach for the same goal.

During the project progress all co-operators have to deal with differences in legislation in education, in terminologies, in cultural backgrounds and in institutional organisation what makes it interesting and challenging for all the partners involved.

### **8.1 Plans for the future**

On the first of September 2009 the Pilot of the ESPIEW European Module starts at HOWEST in Bruges. It was foreseen that students from each partner university should follow the ESPIEW European Module. 25 students applied for the course. Also students from non consortium partners enrolled proving the interest in the project and the ESPEIW European Module also outside of the project partnership.

Based on the preparatory work of each course package team we took care of : planning the schedule of lectures, planning the teaching rooms and the equipment, the creation of a welcome folder, etc...

At the date of this progress report the teachers are still preparing new course content. Especially for those course packages taking place in November & December 2009.

During and after the pilot period (September – December 09) several quality control actions are planned in order to refine the module afterwards. The second main quality control moment will be held via the PROSE tool again with the accent on content, teaching and tutoring, testing and assessment and an overall evaluation of the project. The results will be summarized in the Quality Report made by the external expert and will be taken into account in the refining of the European Module by the project partner team. To ensure a qualitative refining of the European Module students, professors and other stake holders will be invited to fill in the questionnaire and to give their personal comments and suggestions for improvement. Special attention will be given to the question whether the programme has achieved its aims and objectives (competences

and skills) in the creative and innovate manner as it was envisaged in the concept and development. Experts will be invited to participate in some assessments and presentations in order to get their feedback. Taking into account the comments of the Quality Control Manager based on the results of the inquiries held via the above mentioned PROSE tool by all the participants (lecturers, professors, students, administrative staff, experts and other stakeholders) adaptation of the content of the courses, the schedule of lectures, the online courses and the assignments will be considered, agreed upon and implemented. The project management team will then propose a final European Module programme for the next academic year the whole partnership should agree on.

At the end of the project's life time on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 a refined version of the ESPIEW European Module will be taught to a group of new applicant students. The location will be in Antwerp. HS Neubrandenburg is willing to organise the module in Germany in 2011. Every student can enrol in this programme if she/he fulfils the enrolment requirements (Minimum 2 successfully completed semesters in a Bachelor Health Care or Social Work programme or an equivalent of 60 ECTS ). Students can be enrolled for the whole semester or for one of the course packages.

It is the intention of the consortium to sustain the project results by offering the ESPIEW European Module year after year also in distance learning. The final goal is to have the "Entrepreneurial Spirit" as a part of regular curriculum in social work and health care higher education all over Europe.

## **8.2 The wide external dissemination**

Already during the first year of the project a wide internal dissemination activity was set up to inform students from our institutions and to ensure the enrolment of selected students. This was at most an internal dissemination as planned within the partner universities reaching professors and students. All partners in the consortium were asked to provide a dissemination activity list for the first year of co-operation in the project. To enhance the dissemination the project management team made a brochure with all necessary information concerning the Espiew European Module, a poster and several PowerPoint presentations. All this material was uploaded on the Dokeos.Espiew e-platform and free to be used by all partners. The information was also sent to all international partners of the consortium.

### **8.3 The follow up of the ESPIEW project**

During the general meeting in Craiova (Romania) a discussion was held on the future of the ESPIEW Project as entered on the agenda of the meeting. Several ideas were discussed. One of the most solid ideas was to exploit the project results of the ESPIEW project to establish a Network of institutions of higher education and private and public organisations, working around the idea of the implementation of the entrepreneurial spirit in the curricula and the profession of social worker and health care professional and/or in other non-business studies. For this an application for a LLP Erasmus Network Project could be submitted in Spring 2010 to start just at the end of the ESPIEW project in Autumn 2010. HOWEST is ready to prepare and co-ordinate the application.

### **9 Contribution to EU policies**

During the whole process of the elaboration of the new European module all co-operators took care to contribute in all activities and content matters to the EU policies in the area of the Objectives of the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Lisbon Education and Training Progress Indicators and the Lisbon Key Competencies.

#### **9.1 Objectives of the Lifelong Learning Programme**

To contribute to the development of quality of lifelong learning and to promote high performance, innovation and a European dimension in systems and practices in the field:

The first year of the project's lifetime clearly denounces that the nature and level of the partnership, plus the specific expertise of the selected professors and their networks guarantees high performance in creating innovative course content with a spirit of a modern didactic approach.

Especially the drawing up in an international team of the "Standards of Competence" for the different course packages leads to a harmonisation of the programme standards in the EU and in the end it will make the higher education in social and health care able to conquer all other continents.

To support the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning:

The courses are offered to the students via a digital learning platform. Demanding assignments oblige them to cooperate with organisations from all over Europe. In order to be successful, students are required to continuously monitor what is going on in the EU and the rest of the world. Networking and self study are presented as vital tools to be flexible as a professional on the European common market. Students in the European

Module will immediately be immersed and stimulated to an empowering lifelong learning strategy as a necessity to be able to deal with and to understand constant changes in the European social and cultural environment.

Creating the new course content in an international team pushes the co-operators into a multidisciplinary approach on typical social entrepreneurial matters in a very European Union related framework.

To help improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of the opportunities for lifelong learning available within Member States:

All partners have strong links with public and private organisations. Cooperation with networks from professionals in the field were used to design courses and to monitor the quality. In return, internships and outcome information of student assignments will be available for the consortium members and all co-operators .

The internship part of the programme requires good contacts with the field and professional world. All partner universities involved in the project have been dealing with placements for a long time, are very experienced in the follow-up of internships and have set up very good contacts. For some of the students, going for international placements is new and will broaden their horizon and contact with the international world in the field of social and health care.

Students will be able to do an interesting internship in their home country or in an EU partner country during the fifth course package.

The required internship control of the competences and skills to be gained will be done effectively via a balanced system of strong contacts from the teaching staff, the professionals from the field, mentors and supervisors.

To help promote creativity, competitiveness, employability and the growth of entrepreneurial spirit:

The five course packages making up the new European module are designed with the aim of educating top level social entrepreneurs in the management process able to work efficiently with flexible, entrepreneurially motivated colleagues and associates in a very fast changing, competitive environment. It was the fundamental aim of the course developers to have all students consequently develop a more creative and dynamic way of dealing with career planning, job security and entrepreneurship.

After the students have followed a solid innovative programme, their employability will increase. In this period of recession, the need for flexible, problem solving personnel increases. An education programme that squarely faces this specific economic situation of rapid change fits entirely into the Lisbon Strategy.

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To reinforce contribution of lifelong learning to social cohesion, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, gender equality and personal fulfilment:

It is foreseen that during the course introduction and through the ethical and practical course content, the diversity of professors, students and institutions involved, participants are strongly encouraged to open their minds towards gender equality, intercultural dialogue and active European citizenship in order to create possibilities for social cohesion and personal fulfilment.

An organised recruitment strategy in all partner universities guarantees that there won't be any social-religious nor gender exclusion and that all courses are open for disabled students.

All Social Work and Health Care students will have the opportunity to broaden their horizon and improve European citizenship.

To promote language learning and linguistic diversity:

The working and communication language was English also during the general meetings. The teaching language during the courses is English, so the practical use of this language will result in a significant improvement for all participants and persons involved in the organisation.

All the students can also follow language courses at their home universities. implementing the module

The international backgrounds of the participants, professors and students guarantees a large informal linguistic diversity.

To support the realisation of a European Higher Education Area:

Because of the consortium and the broad spread of universities throughout Europe, common experience and expertise lead to improve higher education (quality) standards. Vital importance was given to the use of an common standard (QA) across the management and the project's process using the Prose quality control tool. Especially the drawing up in an international team of the "Standards of Competence" for the different course packages leads to a harmonisation of the programme standards in the EU project partner universities. It is quite conceivable that this will influence the harmonisation in the EU partner countries.

To reinforce the contribution of higher education and advanced vocational education to the process of innovation:

The co-operation between universities and university colleges has a reciprocal beneficial impact on the stimulation and liberation of wider possibilities and synergies

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within the process of innovation in education, along with making a wider orientation on the European social market. To this purpose, among other things, universities from Cyprus and Romania were invited to participate in the project. The project progress and the interested involvement in all project activities denounces the good chance to meet that objective.

To improve the quality and to increase the volume of students and teaching staff mobility throughout Europe:

Because the module is organised as a pilot in Belgium, students and professors from the consortium are asked to go abroad under the Erasmus Mobility Programme during the project's lifetime. Erasmus bilateral agreements were signed between the universities for that purpose.

After the project's lifetime, students from all over Europe will have the opportunity to enrol in this European module under the Erasmus Mobility Programme.

To facilitate the development of innovative practices in education and training at tertiary level, and their transfer, including from one participating country to others:

New and modern pedagogical and didactical approaches (self-organising team work, interactive learning, group facilitation, network organisation behaviour, peer- and self evaluations, self study, tutoring, e-learning, etc) are introduced in all courses across all subjects, platforms and borders. This sharing of expertise in pedagogical and didactical approaches creates a win-win situation for all participants in the different (new) Member States.

To support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning:

Special attention is given to the development of online courses and a well structured digital learning platform Dokeos is in use. This leads to an improved technological capability for all students and all members of organisations / enterprises that co-operate in this project.

All communication between the actors in the project is ICT-based, e-mail, discussion forum, Dokeos platform. In the long run the courses could possibly be delivered as an "open university" module helping to sustain the results of the project.

## 9.2 ESPIEW and the 2008 priorities

Teaching modules in highly interdisciplinary areas or in areas with specific need for strong transnational cooperation in teaching:

The reached target group are bachelor students in Social Work and Health Care in search of profound knowledge of modern entrepreneurship to gain specific competences in the competitive social market.

Professors and students make up a multidisciplinary, multicultural group with different backgrounds.

Interested Master students, graduates and working people in search of knowledge and entrepreneurial skills are the second target group.

As the project is covering a borderless subject, the elaboration and implementation of the European Module is based on transnational cooperation in teaching.

## 9.3 Lisbon education & training progress indicators

### *Mobility*

During the preparation period and the first year of co-operation in the project the participating professors exchanged a lot of expertise and experience. They have already learned a lot about new methods and, from discussions on the content, have received new insights into the differences of the educational systems, the differences in interpretation of the Bologna declaration and the needs evoked by the Lisbon Strategy.

Professors are aware of that, during the implementation period of the module, teachers and students from all participating universities will have to go abroad. The exchange will be organised based on the LLP Erasmus Teacher/Student Exchange Programme.

Bilateral Agreements for teacher and student exchange in the Erasmus Programme are signed between partner institutions. A total of 25 students coming from 6 countries.

Participating students during the test- implementation phase are coming from different EU countries (enlarged EU).

Incoming students have been welcomed by Howest, the university organising the module on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

The European Module offer participants 30 ECTS credits giving the possibility to obtain those credits on the diploma supplement at the end of the international semester.

In a later stage the module will hopefully become so attractive that students from tertiary level from all over the world will enrol.

The enrolment of students in this module is increasing the total mobility figures of every university involved.

Concrete percentage cannot be given for the moment.

#### **9.4 Lisbon key competences**

##### ***Communication in foreign languages***

All communication and courses are in English. Part of the prerequisites for students is having initial competences for communicating in English and being able to understand spoken messages, to initiate, sustain and conclude conversations and to read and understand texts. Participation in this module will refine these competences. Multi-culturalism of the group, the European social context, communication with the professional world, formal and informal communication certifies the process progress of language learning.

Final result: improved level of communication throughout lifelong learning.

##### ***Digital competence***

It is foreseen in the module preparation that students will be trained in the search for, the collection and the handling of information via computers. A lot of computer applications will be used. The course of the virtual learning platform Dokeos will increase student's competences and skills to deal with ICT in a critical and systematic way, assessing relevance and distinguishing real from virtual.

Professors and students will use internet for networking and contacts with the external organisations.

The confrontation of Social Workers and Health Care workers with Communication, Management and ICT (cross and multi-disciplinary approach) in combination with the education-industry relationship (experts/internships) fits entirely in the aims of the EU to go for a more knowledge-driven EU society.

The creation of online course packages on the Dokeos.Espiew e-platform encourages and simplifies the lifelong learning.

### ***Learning to learn***

The implementation of group and individual assignments provoke the necessity to adapt learning methods with real time planning and management, improving problem solving, acquirement, evaluation, assimilation of new knowledge and skills to apply in a variety of contexts.

Students make a social business simulation plan and integrate acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes into a professional work placement.

This contributes to the acquisition of competences needed for own carrier management.

The module induces self-study and tutoring in a way that students will find learning to learn lifelong normal.

Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence:

As professors/students have diverse nationalities and different cultural backgrounds awareness of their interpersonal, intercultural and social competences increases. Cultural differences and diversity will be crucial in workshops, team and group work and will give students the ability to communicate constructively in multicultural environments and to elicit civic competences.

Social diversity and inclusion are to be taught as part of a course "intercultural communication" to deepen solidarity and to stimulate social responsibility and competition affecting the EU community.

### ***Entrepreneurship***

Professors and students are making a group of interested persons bringing ideas to realisation using their personal initiatives, creativity, acquired competences and improved entrepreneurial sense and spirit.

Starting from creative ideas students are to be coached to work out a social project plan based on entrepreneurial strategies, to set up objectives, to take responsibility for their actions in order to succeed in a successful social venture.

Students are guided to adapt their attitude to a open-minded exploitation of their creative ideas influenced by external circumstances.

After the implementation of the pilot programme, partner universities from all over the EU will be invited to be engaged in this new European module.

The combination of being involved in a very new and innovative topic in the world of

social work and health care in an international, multilateral programme gives all lecturers of all partner universities a special set of tools to look at the labour market and the need of an entrepreneurial spirit in the world of professionals. It create the possibility to work out the programme in a more complete European context and it already nourished the intention to build a network of institutions of higher education and private and public organisations, working around the idea of the implementation of the entrepreneurial spirit in the curricula and the profession of social worker and health care professional and/or in other non-business studies.

### **10 From ESPIEW to NESPIEW: “Network for Entrepreneurial Spirit Improving European Welfare” – a network combating poverty and social exclusion**

The future of the successful ESPIEW project was often discussed during the several general meetings. Several ideas were discussed. One of the most solid ideas was to exploit the project results of the ESPIEW project to establish a Network of institutions of higher education and private and public organisations, working around the idea of the implementation of the entrepreneurial spirit in the curricula and the profession of social worker and health care professional and/or in other non-business studies. ( at least 31 partners should participate in the project! )

For this an application for a LLP Erasmus Academic Network Project could be submitted 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 to start just at the end of the ESPIEW project in Autumn 2010. HOWEST was willing to prepare in co-operation with the ESPIEW consortium partners and co-ordinate the application and project.

N E S P I E W – the proposed Work Packages, content and goals of the Academic Network:

- WP1 Project management, co-ordination and steering committee
- WP2 Control and quality assurance
- WP3 Research and analysis of entrepreneurial skills: similarities and differences between EU member states
- WP4 Design of a European NESPIEW vision and mission statement
- WP5 Subgroups activities on specific topics like ethics, law, entrepreneurial skills, etc.... with related activities (organising of seminars on entrepreneurial topics, literary overview)
- WP6 Annual organisation of the ESPIEW European Module and its future development
- WP7 Organisation of an international conference concerning entrepreneurial spirit in the non-business education sector - Organizing workshops and training sessions in entrepreneurial skills

- WP8 Dissemination, promotion of the network and project results
- WP9 Exploitation of project results

The final NESPIEW Erasmus Academic Network project proposal was submit to the EACEA on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010. All 42 partners from all 31 LLP EU countries are hopeful to co-operate in this interesting new network starting in Autumn 2010.

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