



Leading and Managing Change in Higher Education (La MANCHE)

4th PARTNER MEETING

La MANCHE VIRTUAL THINK PANEL MINUTES

Date: 11th June 2014

Time: 09:00 am

Venue: Yerevan State University

Attendees: see list attached

1. Workshop in networking: Stakeholder management

In the beginning of the session Rachel Mason from UCB provided an overview of the different entities, communities and individuals a higher education institution should/could share leadership and co-create with. The session aimed among others at identifying the potential within the La MANCHE institutions and at identifying the restraining forces for change. The partners used the External Stakeholders Mapping Tool and were invited to join a series of interactive exercises with the aim of mapping their own stakeholders. The presentation of Rachel and the toolkit are available for use at the project website.

2. Workshop in networking: Managing and communicating policy changes

Dr Gergana Dimitrova from IUC project team presented in details the four major stages in the process of managing and communicating policy changes. In the beginning she spoke about how to define the problem and to set the agenda. It is essential to make sure and prove that the problem is a legitimate public concern. A series of essential steps to undertake were outlined such as diagnosing the conditions that cause the problem, campaigning, problematizing and raising awareness, negotiating the problem definition within teams and with partners and stakeholders etc.

The second stage measures are aimed at assembling evidence and constructing policy alternatives (policy options). Following this, it is essential to design the policy proposal by developing a policy instrument mix, developing a delivery organization mix and developing an implementation strategy and plan and a

comprehensive evaluation policy. In the end Gergana focussed on the importance of telling the story and disseminating the policy ideas in the most effective way.

3. La MANCHE Virtual Think Tank: presentation and validation

The La MANCHE Virtual Think Tank Panel was organized with the aim of giving an official start to the activities on the online platform. The think tank launch marks a milestone in the process of project implementation for a number of reasons. Unlike the activities completed to date in the project which involved exclusively the project teams of the 29 La MANCHE consortium members, the activities through the La MANCHE Virtual Think Tank (La MANCHE VTT) will involve a large number of external stakeholders. It goes without saying, that motivating non-consortium members to engage with the project and to contribute directly to the project activities represents a huge challenge.

As a result of the collaboration across the consortium and with stakeholders outside La MANCHE a Strategy for Leading and Managing Change in Higher Education (the La MANCHE Strategy) will be designed and approved for implementation at consortium level. The La MANCHE Strategy elaboration will include a series of measures, the first one being mapping out the stakeholders and identifying the policy changes each of the La MANCHE institutions would focus on. This would happen both online through the La MANCHE VTT and offline in the frame of a large number of networking and dissemination events. In her presentation, the Project Coordinator showed in details the online platform at www.lamanche-tempus.eu and demonstrated how to proceed with the initial registration.

During the session the texts the La MANCHE of founding documents including its mission and vision statements and the code of conduct and the rules for membership were presented and validated. The final version of these will be uploaded on the project website and will be translated in the national languages of the five Partner Countries so that a large number of stakeholders could access these. Special attention was paid to the Consultation Section on the VTT which functions as a blog and provides the major tool for exchange of ideas, opinions and expertise in the field of university governance and change management. The Consultation section within the La MANCHE VTT will sustain its activities also after the project life and will continue to provide consultation and support to higher education institutions outside the consortium. Each of the registered stakeholders will be expected to make and post at least one comment or remark within the VTT. The topics to comment on will be chosen by the La MANCHE institutions which will post at least one statement to initiate a discussion on. The deadline for posting the statements is December 2014.

The La MANCHE institutions will be responsible for facilitating the initiated discussions which should be concluded by the end of March 2015 at the latest. The institution which initiated and facilitated a certain discussion will be responsible for summarizing the results and conclusions and for drafting an at least two page long text to be integrated in the La MANCHE Strategy. The deadline for preparing the summaries to constitute the La MANCHE Strategy shall be no later than end of April 2015. The draft of the La MANCHE Strategy consisting of the texts and statements developed jointly by the partners and the stakeholders will be presented at the five national conferences to be organized in the five Partner Countries in the period of May – June 2015.

In the end of her presentation, the Project Coordinator focussed on the promotion of the La MANCHE VTT. On one hand the VTT shall be put at the heart of all project dissemination activities. On the other hand, the La MANCHE VTT will simultaneously serve as tool for effective project dissemination and will ensure the sustainability of major project activities following the end of the project as agreed in the Communication and Post-Project Dissemination Strategy.

4. Developing the La MANCHE Strategy in the Partner Countries

Following the presentation and the launch of the La MANCHE VTT within Work Package 6, Vadim Sirkeli from CSU, Moldova, Work Package 7 leader, presented in details the upcoming activities to be completed in Work Package 7. These aim at achieving the project's sixth specific objective, namely to provide a platform for critical dialogue and to promote joint problem solving and interaction among Partner Countries universities and other key stakeholders in higher education. In particular, activities in Work Package 7 will stimulate student grassroots leadership initiatives.

Vadim focussed on the networking events to be organized by the end of September 2014 at the latest at the 23 Partner Countries institutions in the project. Following these, the various stakeholders in the La MANCHE countries, who are willing to engage with the project, shall register for membership in one of the six Transnational Themed Working Groups (WGs) to be established in the project. As members of these groups the stakeholders shall contribute to the elaboration of the La MANCHE Strategy by providing comments and remarks and by sharing expertise and experience via the La MANCHE VTT. Each La MANCHE partner institution shall attract at least six stakeholders to join each of the six WGs.

In September 2014 IUC will host the Young Leaders Academy (YLA), a five-day training in leadership for students of the 28 higher education institutions in La MANCHE. With the aim of networking and project results dissemination, in 2015 in Work Package 7 five national La MANCHE conferences will be organized in the five Partner Countries. In addition, in the end of the project life a final dissemination event will be hosted by ONEU, Ukraine. The finalized La MANCHE Strategy will be presented and actively disseminated at the event. In the end of his presentation Vadim once again drew the partners' attention to the indicators for completion of the activities in Work Package 7. The full presentation of Vadim is available on the project website.

5. Programming and planning of upcoming major project events and activities. Debriefing

Christina thanked Vadim for his extensive and thorough presentation on the upcoming activities in Work Package 7. She summarized the results of the discussions during the day and once again listed the major upcoming activities according to Work Packages. Concerning the project management and administration in Work Package 1, the Project Coordinator reminded the partners on the importance of timely provision of all project evidence and reporting and financial documents to IUC, the project lead organization. She also informed the partners that the next online SC meeting is scheduled for September 2014 and invitation to attend it through doodle will be sent to the SC members in late July. Despite the fact that the project activities in Work Packages 2, 3, 4 and 5 are completed, enhanced dissemination of the intellectual outputs prepared is crucial for the overall success of the project.

Within Work Packages 6 and 7 the partners will start to collaborate intensively with various stakeholders both online through the La MANCHE VTT and offline in the frame of a number of networking and dissemination events. Concerning the YLA in September 2014 Christina asked the partners whose students need a visa to enter Bulgaria to email their passport details as soon as possible and before the summer holidays. All higher education institutions in the consortium are also invited to submit the names of the selected students along with the minutes of the selection procedure to IUC until the end of June. IUC will prepare the agenda and send detailed information on the five-day training event in July. Anastasiya Makarenko from NTU KhPI asked a question regarding the flight tickets purchase for the students. Corinne Stewart from ASD was interested in receiving information regarding the organization of the students transfers from the airport to Dobrich and their stay on the spot. Christina confirmed that IUC will take care of the whole organization of the YLA including transfers to and from airport, accommodation in Dobrich, students' social programme etc. Flight

tickets and reimbursement of travel costs incurred in regard with the student mobility shall follow the already established mechanisms for costs reimbursement in the consortium.

Regarding the upcoming activities in Work Package 8 Christina mentioned again the data and feedback collection on major project outcomes and the questionnaire to be filled out by the La MANCHE partners on the consortium viability and the communication mechanisms within the consortium.

The activities in Work Package 9 are closely related with those in Work Package 6 and 7. It was stressed that only the effective and enhanced dissemination of the project towards an extended number of internal and external stakeholders could ensure the successful completion of the project as whole. The project dissemination day in the framework of the international conference Education in 21st Century: Problems and Challenges organized on 12th June on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of YSU will provide an excellent opportunity to present the project results to wider audiences including representatives of Armenian universities outside La MANCHE and public authorities and policy makers in higher education. In the end of the day the Project Coordinator thanked all partners for their work and contribution to the meeting.