



TEMPUS PROJECT- 517200-1-2011-1-BE-TEMPUS-SMGR

A REPORT REGARDING THE RETRAINING WEEK IN BELGIUM

Period: from September 15th to September 21th

Location: Flanders, Belgium

Campuses: Ghent, Sint-Niklaas, Aalst

Purpose: retraining within the Tempus-ECBAC project

Domains:

- ∞ International cooperation
- ∞ Quality assurance
- ∞ Student services
- ∞ IT service

Retraining team:

1. Aleksandra Boričić (The School of Higher Technical Professional Education Niš – international cooperation)
2. Sanja Kovačević (College of Professional Studies for Pre-School Teachers Pirot – international cooperation)
3. Nikola Stolić (College of Agriculture and Food Technology Prokuplje – quality assurance)

- 4.Miodrag Đorđević (College of Textiles Leskovac – quality assurance)
- 5.Milan Sretenović (College of Health Studies in Čuprija – student services)
- 6.Zoran Vasić (Preschool Teacher Training College Kruševac – student services)
- 7.Mladen Nikolić (Chemical Technology College of Professional Studies in Kruševac – IT service)
- 8.Miodrag Stanković (College of Applied Professional Studies in Vranje – IT service)

The representatives of the aforementioned colleges participating in the Tempus-ECBAC project departed for Belgium on Saturday, September 15th at 13.30 hours from Belgrade airport, on which they landed again the following Saturday, September 21th at 23.45 hours.

The retraining was organised within the period of five weekdays, from Monday, September 16th to Friday, September 20th 2013.

DAY ONE

On the first day the members of the Serbian delegation started their joint retraining in Ghent, at the so-called Technology Campus, located just outside Ghent's former city walls, within the typical 19th century working men's neighbourhood of Rabot. According to agenda, our first day lasted from 9 o'clock in the morning to 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

The members of the Serbian team were greeted by the hosts, Geert de Lepeleer and André Govaert. Mr. Geert introduced us to the entire retraining programme only to begin immediately with the first item on the agenda.

Namely, Mr.Geert and Mr. André briefly presented the history of the KAHO Sint-Lieven University College and introduced the participants to the initial merger between the colleges in Flanders which took place in 1995. Within the said merger eight colleges in Flanders integrated into one organisation located in three campuses in three regions: Ghent, Sint Niklaas and Aalst. However, our host also presented us with the news relating to the next major integration which should be ending with October 1st. Within this particular merger six campuses of both University College in Brussels (HUB) and Catholic University College Ghent (KAHO Sint Lieven) will join their forces, thus forming the organisation which will henceforth be known as HUB-KAHO.

After the introductory presentation the Serbian delegation visited the Central services within the campus. All services significant for our delegation are located in a separate building and the staff working there is employed exclusively in those services.

Upon our return from the Central services professor Hugo Verbeke gave us a lecture on research projects undertaken and developed at the KAHO Sint Lieven University College. On the first day we were able to gain insight into the amount of practical and useful activities which take place at Flanders colleges. Projects are based on the practical needs of the industry and market, and colleges are constantly working on strengthening the links with those who could in the future use their final product - competent professional staff.

Student activities within KAHO Sint-Lieven were presented to us by Simon van Hyfte, the chairman of the Student Board, who is in charge of student participation at KAHO Sint-Lieven. We had the opportunity to hear Simon at one of our consortium meetings in Vranje, where he also presented us with various activities and engagements of student organisations at KAHO which drastically differ from their counterparts in Serbia. Namely, student participation at KAHO Sint-Lieven is very seriously designed, it has got very elaborate hierarchical structure and it engages very willing and responsible young people within the Student Board who take care of various aspects of students' lives during their education at the College. This organisation has got the right to take part in decision making with regard to tuition fees, regulations on education and examination, students rights, regulations on students mobility, academic calendar, etc. Likewise, the students' representative body has an advisory role in the field of quality assurance.

The next presentation was given by professor Philippe Saey, the person responsible in the laboratory for control and automation. His presentation concerned the project I-MOCCA (Interregional Mobility and Competence Centres in Automation). Among other things, this project is also a major indicator of the research activity taking place at KAHO Sint-Lieven. The aim of the project is to establish interregional network of competence centres and regional nodes in the fields of industrial data communication and embedded systems. In addition to Flanders, the partners in this project come from Great Britain and France.

After the presentation of professor Philippe Saey the delegation visited professor Greet vanden Berghe who works on the Department of Computer Science and who does research in the field of Combinatorial Optimisation and Decision Support. Along with her PhD students she introduced us to three very significant projects (doctoral dissertation projects) which are connected with the fields of medicine, industry, etc.

After the fantastic impression conveyed by the energy and professionalism of young people in Greet vanden Berghe's team, the delegation headed for the laboratory of material sciences and mechanical engineering where we were welcomed by Pascal Lava. There we had the opportunity to be introduced to a project relating to testing,

finding and overcoming weaknesses and flaws in various materials. The laboratory is well equipped and provides excellent conditions for conducting experiments and research.

The last stop on our first day of retraining at KAHO was Student guidance and counselling service. For the first time we had the opportunity to visit the service attended by two professors whose job is exclusively connected with this particular service. Professor Luc Demaegd explained to us the purpose and function of this service. Students address this service not only when they have problems with their subject matter, but also when they have the problem with the manner of learning and mastering the material. Students either attend the service in person, or they send e-mails. The service receives regular feedback information which helps them sustain and improve their quality .

With this visit the delegation concluded their first retraining day.

DAY TWO

The second day was reserved for cultural activities within which the delegation visited the cathedral in Ghent and the famous town of Bruges (Brugge) which is put on the list of the UNESCO World Heritage.

DAY THREE

On the third day the Serbian delegation visited the Campus Waas in Sint Niklaas. We were welcomed by Catherine Decraene who briefly introduced us to study programmes implemented at this campus. Specifically, here we had the opportunity to hear and see two professors who deal with the education of agro- and biotechnologists and primary and secondary teachers. After a short tour around the campus, the classrooms, laboratories and specialised classrooms we were joined by professor Stef Aerts from the Department of Agro- and Biotechnology. Professor Aerts presented us with their latest curriculum, as well as with the manner in which this curriculum was developed during the years. There is a marked tendency to direct the students at their final year towards independent research, innovative projects and their graduate thesis. Practical application of knowledge and competencies which lead towards a proper place on the labour market are some of the goals of the presented curriculum.

After this presentation we visited skill laboratories intended for those students attending nursing and midwifery programmes. During our visit to the laboratories we had the opportunity to see an actual hospital wing with rooms equipped with fourty hospital beds. Each bed contains a modern medical dummy, while some of the rooms are also equipped with monitors and incubators. At the end of the hall there is a storage of medical equipment where students obtain their medical supplies that are carefully repacked and reused. There one can find bandages, catheters, syringes,

pumps, uniforms, various appliances and other equipment. The College cooperates with local hospitals and dispensaries and certain pieces of equipment are even donated by the aforementioned institutions.

Upon our return from the laboratory we had the opportunity to hear a presentation of professor Sander Van Acker who lectures within the Secondary teacher training study programme. The basic feature of this programme, as well as of that of the Primary teacher training, is an integrated curriculum, where the students are instructed not only in the subject matter of a chosen field (mathematics, biology, language, etc.), but also in methodology of teaching and working with children in primary and secondary schools.

The third day ended with the visit to the Aquaculture plant in the municipality of Zele, some 20 km from Ghent. We were welcomed by Wouter Meeus, the senior aquaculturist who gave us a short tour of the plant. Namely, the Department for Agro- and biotechnology in Sint Niklaas rents the facility from a local farmer and uses it to develop aquacultures within research projects also connected with the market.

DAY FOUR

On the fourth day of our retraining the delegation visited Campus Dirk Martens in Aalst. We were welcomed by the Dean and then Koen Van de Moortele, our guide through the campus and the person responsible for internal and external communication at the campus, introduced us to the first colleagues who were about to start our fourth day of retraining by representing their study programmes. Marleen Dello and Daisy Michiels (on behalf of pre-school education) and Christel De Neve (on behalf of primary education) presented their curricula within the Department for Teacher Training.

An De Moor, the person in charge of international cooperation and one of the main coordinators for international cooperation within KAHO Sint-Lieven, apart from Geert de Lepeleer, presented us with the education in Flanders, as well as with internationalisation at KAHO. She explained the manner in which the contacts within international mobility of students and staff are being established, as well as the conditions which every institutions needs to meet in the process of signing bilateral agreements.

After this segment of retraining, our host Koen Van de Moortele took us on a tour of the campus. We had the opportunity to visit numerous classrooms, but we were especially impressed with the video-conference classroom (classroom video conferencing is usually held between Aalst and Sint Niklaas, bearing in mind that they share the study programme in nursing) . This classroom is equipped with state-of-the

art equipment. We had the opportunity to visit their auditoriums, but we were especially taken aback by the simulation centre used by the students within the Health Care study programme. Namely, this centre contains a simulation room in which professors and other professionals simulate serious situations with patients, record the reactions and activities of their students and later analyse them in a nearby debriefing room. Furthermore, this centre possesses a very expensive state-of-the-art simulation dummy with the supporting equipment. Everything that takes place in the simulation centre was explained and described to us by Filip Dumez, a lecturer/researcher in the field of Health Care at the Campus Dirk Martens in Aalst. Upon completing his clarification on the simulation centre Filip Dumez also introduced us to the subject of Health Care in Belgium. This working day was concluded by Alberte de Cnijf with her presentation on competence-based education and Florence Network for Nursing and Midwifery which encompasses 17 countries, including Belgium.

DAY FIVE

On the fifth day our delegation was divided into groups of two. Each group visited the service relevant to their particular field of interest.

I Zoran Vasić and Milan Sretenović attended retraining in the domain of student service. By gaining insight into the performance of their services they received guidelines for introducing changes to the manner in which our schools function and operate, with the aim of establishing the Academy and offering joint services.

All activities at the campus, both inside and outside the classrooms, are optimised for students. Grand libraries at the campuses containing numerous journals, papers and textbooks, classrooms intended for practical training and computer classrooms are available to students throughout the day, which is a fantastic way to help them master their subjects, do their own research and become capable of independent work upon completing their studies.

The projects and research conducted at the college have practical application, not only in health care, but also in industry and economy.

Student service (STUVO) represents an organisation common to the entire KAHO Sint-Lieven and it deals with all the issues connected with extracurricular activities of the students. It has its own budget and it is independent in providing its services to the students. Its field of activities includes organising student accommodation and food, providing legal and financial aid, organising tutorial for those students who encounter difficulties with their studies. Within STUVO students can also visit a psychologist, they can involve themselves in cultural and sport activities, they can obtain discounts

for cultural and sport events as well as for public transport. Stuvo also takes care of the college environment.

The conclusion of the group who attended this segment of retraining is that there are possibilities for establishing a common student service within the future Academy, but it is necessary to consider those possibilities in the light of the current economic situation in the country and assess them in relation to our system of higher education.

II Miodrag Đorđević and Nikola Stolić attended retraining in the domain of quality assurance. The impression of this group was that quality assurance represents a comprehensive process which is implemented continuously and systematically. Moreover, for two days every year there is a particular retraining for all those employed in various domains, which is not the case at our colleges. The basic principles at the core of quality assurance policy at the aforementioned colleges are:

- quality is a constant responsibility and permanent care of all college employees
- regular and systematic check of aims and outcomes of all study programmes
- continuous cooperation with appropriate institutions in the country and abroad

What is especially important from the standpoint of accreditation of new study programmes, and it has not yet become a part of our practice, is a trial accreditation of study programmes for one generation of students, during which the market reaction is constantly monitored and changes are consequently introduced to certain study programmes.

It is extremely important for each and every college participating in the Tempus ECBAC project to be introduced to the practice and modes of work of the European partners. They can benefit from it from several aspects. First and foremost, they receive guidelines in the process of organising and financing the future Academy. Secondly, the project partners are enabled to comprehend the concept of the European colleges during these retraining sessions, which can help each school perceive the real situation and suggest new approaches and methods in the organisation of our colleges.

III Miodrag Stanković and Mladen Nikolić attended retraining in the domain of IT technologies. The colleagues have particularly pointed to the advantages of IT services at KAHO Sint-Lieven:

- organisation (activities, location, scope of responsibilities)
- working environment, support services, innovations, coordination between services of the three campuses

-technical information relating to the manner of installing, maintaining and using the equipment necessary for this kind of coordination and connection

-the usual problems which occur in the process of maintenance of the equipment and the platform

Upon gaining insight into KAHO IT centre our colleagues are satisfied with practical and concrete answers which should help them in the process of establishing parallel services within the Academy.

IV Aleksandra Boričić and Sanja Kovačević attended retraining in the domain of international cooperation. Geert de Lepeleer, one of the main coordinators for international cooperation at KAHO Sint-Lieven, shared very interesting and useful details regarding establishment and successful maintenance of international relations. Bearing in mind that international cooperation is an extremely important factor in sustaining and improving the quality of education of young staff, it is necessary for our country to become a worthy participant in international flows. In order for that to happen the study programmes of our colleges will inevitably go through changes, placing the focus on practical skills and research projects. In order for the teaching staff of our colleges to establish international contacts with their colleagues abroad (which is crucial in the process of student and staff mobility) they will have to be able to use English actively. This is possible only with great effort and enthusiasm of all those working at our colleges.

What should be particularly emphasised is that these services function as units independent of the teaching staff in the sense that all employees in these services perform their job within the services alone. Therefore, it is not possible to work in the service for international cooperation and teach. One cannot simultaneously take care of quality assurance and give lectures. It is perhaps possible in the beginning, but when these services are developed it will be necessary to employ additional staff which will perform these activities for the entire Academy. The benefit which can be gained from this manner of work and approach to education is enormous.

In Flanders we had the opportunity to make sure that their system of education functions. Regardless of the fact that Flanders invests large amount of financial resources in education, if there were not for well devised system of education those resources would be spent in vain. Therefore, KAHO can serve as a good example of the direction in which we should point our own energy and endeavours.

After separate retraining sessions the delegation gathered again to visit KAHO brewery. The brewery also cooperates with the market for the purpose of research and in agreement with other beer producers on the market.

After our visit to the brewery we had the opportunity to visit a passive house which is a part of the project conducted by the Department of Civil Engineering. Our host was Sabien Windels.

The last presentation within the retraining week was named Dignity in Care. Leen Stevens, a researcher and a lector at KAHO Sint-Lieven in Ghent, is one of the project managers at the project ***sTimul experience***. It is a didactic concept which by means of empathy aims to open up the horizons for those who deal with the care of patients and elderly population, as well as with the care of people with disabilities. The partners of Flemish colleges on this project are colleges from France, Netherlands and Great Britain.

The last presentation was followed by the evaluation of the entire retraining week during which all members of the Serbian delegation had only words of praise for excellent organisation and hearty welcome on the part of all the colleagues at different campuses that we had had the opportunity to visit. We exchanged experiences and contacts and we all hope that we will be able to faithfully recreate the impressions we had gained and share them with our colleagues so that we can all embark upon the project of changing the current practice. That course can help us survive, but more than anything, it can help us rise above the current situation and become a beacon for the entire region.

Aleksandra Boričić _____

Miodrag Đorđević _____

Miodrag Stanković _____

Nikola Stolić _____

Zoran Vasić _____

Milan Sretenović _____

Mladen Nikolić _____

Sanja Kovačević _____