

## LIPS - Linguistic and Intercultural Preparation of Students for the workplace - a co-operative approach of universities in the framework of Leonardo student mobility

<u>General information:</u>	The project develops pilot measures to improve students' skills and competences for their successful completion of work experiences abroad
<u>Partners:</u>	18 partners from 8 European countries. All partners have been involved in (Leonardo) internships and/or in online linguistic and intercultural courses.
<u>Target groups:</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students in Business Studies and related subjects</li> <li>2. Supervisors and in-service-trainers in companies</li> <li>3. Counsellors and language teachers at universities</li> </ol>
<u>Duration:</u>	24 months (Oct. 2005- Sept.2007)
<u>Funding:</u>	The project is co-funded by the European Commission, Community Vocational Training Programme

### A.) Language and intercultural training

The project will develop the methodology and materials for an online course called "language and intercultural training" (which students are advised to take prior to their departure on Leonardo mobility projects). The course focuses on "**key communicative situations in the work place**". The first impression students give of themselves during an internship often prepares the ground for successful collaboration. As a consequence, the training concentrates on "**getting it right the first time round**", in order to avoid misunderstandings caused by a weak first impression.

In collaboration with potential employers and students, the project will identify key situations and develop an innovative media-based learning community (including interactive media applications such as "moodle" and "podcasts") which will be tested during the pilot phase and implemented after the successful completion of the LIPS-project

#### How do we identify key situations?

The key situations to be explored will be collected by the project partners in every participating country. Each station will collect 3 - 5 situations which are relevant to practical training and internships.

#### How do we record key situations?

The situations will be documented in the language of the country and in English. With the help of the new media, a range of photos, graphics and audio information will be collated to illustrate the situation.

#### How do we analyse key situations and use them for teaching?

From the three regions (Southern, Western, and Middle & Eastern Europe), one typical key situation each will be selected for demonstration on video and teaching purposes.

We will analyse and teach the verbal, non-verbal and cultural aspects of these situations.

#### Results of the analysis

The main result will be three interactive video modules produced for the project. These video modules and a basic version of the online course will be available online and on CD - Rom for users with a lower bandwidth connection. Good practice guidelines will be produced; these guidelines will address the role of a foreign student in a company.

## **B.) The "European Twinning module" for working in a SME**

Apart from their language and intercultural preparation, the students will be trained as "cultural brokers". Too often student interns are seen as a "challenge" for the work place as they need a lot of training and have little to offer when they arrive.

### **How can this be changed?**

This measure has been designed to raise the value of the interns for the company they will work for. In their respective home countries, the students should get in touch with companies similar to the one they are going to work for abroad. They should analyse the company at home in detail and be prepared to share this knowledge with the company abroad. With this special knowledge, the value of the trainee will be raised.

## **C.) Cultural guidelines for the target groups**

For each geographical area, the project will develop guidelines of good practice. Three different sets of guidelines will be developed.

- Guidelines for enterprise supervisors (in all project languages)
- Guidelines for international offices on how to implement an online course and how to provide course information (in English)
- Good practice guidelines for the students who go abroad in order to work for a company will complement the online course

These guidelines will come with a virtual community where questions concerning the guidelines will be discussed by the project team (guidelines 1 and 2).

## **D.) Sample scenario (from the student's point of view)**

Marie, a Business student from the University of Umeå (Sweden) is preparing for her 3-month practical training abroad. As part of the application procedure for the program, she enrolls in our LIPS-Online Learning course. After consulting the LIPS-project guidelines, her counselor suggests a challenge to her – an internship in the area of marketing and sales in an optician's shop in Italy. Marie has already worked in England, but the internship in Italy will provide her with access to a completely new culture and language. The optician's shop wants to improve its services for international tourists and got in touch with the LIPS-community of practice. Marie has a beginner-to-intermediate level of Italian and uses self-learning courses in Italian.

Now the LIPS-Online Learning Course begins. Marie gets a short introduction into the course concept by the counselor and logs into the learning platform, where the course is provided. Here she can get in touch with other Leonardo students participating in the program, e.g. Bernd from Germany, who, in turn, plans to go to Sweden and who has contacted her to get first-hand information on the Swedish business culture.

The first key situation dealt with on the course is introducing oneself to others with special focus on cultural and non-verbal aspects in Italy. Most of what Marie deals with is new to her, although she has once been in Rome on a 3-week holiday.

At the end of the module Marie gets the tasks to analyse a conflicting situation in a company in Sweden. She decides to analyze the situation how an optician in a Swedish optician's shop approaches a customer who has a complaint and documents her findings complete with photos in her online journal which is part of her portfolio. After a number of online-chats with Bernd from Germany she decides to share her journal with him, as he is very helpful about it and a nice guy as well.

After 3 more modules Marie receives confirmation that her Leonardo-Mobility application has been successful. Before she heads south to Italy she notices that the size of her portfolio has increased remarkably through the last weeks and months. And so has her knowledge about Swedish and Italian (and even German) business customs and habits. She really feels that she has something to offer to her Italian employer.

To cut a long story short, her internship in Italy turns out to be a great success. On the basis of her online course she has been able to make valuable contributions to the strategy of the Italian shop to attract tourists as potential customers. In turn, one of the young employees of the Italian optician's shop has learned a little Swedish from Marie and is planning to visit Marie in Sweden ...

### **E.) Main Action Phases of the project:**

Oct05 - Feb06	Specification of requirements of target groups and participating organisations and identification of the "key communicative situations in the work place" (Needs and Framework Analysis - Work Package 3: Umeå University)
Nov05 23/24	First Plenary Project Meeting in Remagen, Germany (followed by Managing Cultural Diversity Seminar (25/26/27) Hosted by Project Coordinator University of Applied Sciences, Koblenz)
Mar06 - Aug06	Design specifications (Concept and Design of Online Course Modules - WP4: inter.research)
Apr06 - Sep07	Development of learning materials (WP5: Mykolo Romerio University)
Sep06 - Aug07	Test Run of Online Course Modules (WP6: Pecs Tudományegyetem)
Sept07 6-9	Second Plenary Project Meeting in Brussels, Belgium. Hosted by Partner "Jeune Entrepreneurs"