

**CASE STUDY**  
**“THE RENEWAL OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN THE RESULT**  
**OF TEAMWORK”**

**Tallinn University &**  
**Pärnu City Department of Education and Culture**

**Information about the project**

Duration: 6 months during 2010  
 Project performer: Tallinn University, Open University, Centre for Continuing Education  
 Project financier: Pärnu City Department of Education and Culture (DEC)  
 Project partner: Pärnu City Department of Education and Culture

**What is your suggestion to other universities who are interested in initiating a regional co-operation project in the field of university LLL?**

**Virve Kinkar, project manager**

*“Standing still is really going backwards. New things are worthwhile to practice and new experiences are always a valuable source of learning.”*

<b>Aim of the project</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knowledge and skills for the renewal of the curriculum based on the updated national curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools and the development plan according to the school's peculiarity and locality.</li> <li>2. The formation of learning communities that support the development of the school through the involvement of social partners.</li> </ol> <p>The involvement of interest and stakeholder groups (from vocational and hobby schools, learning aid centres, enterprises and cultural institutions, also education officers, representative board of students etc.).</p>
<b>The project outline</b>	<p>The initiative to conduct the training came from the DEC as they recognized the need for better use of collaboration between schools as well as for the resources that are available to the social partners in the context of renewal of the school curricula and the implementation of the curricula.</p> <p>The specialists of DEC turned to the structural unit of Tallinn University that has the specific competence with a proposal to organise a training programme that supports the renewal of curricula.</p> <p>To more effectively specify the training needs several meetings were held between the client and the university. A support group of educational institutions was created where the objectives, necessary topics and the training format were discussed. A curriculum was compiled by university in which the objectives and general topics (the framework) were specified; the</p>

	<p>subtopics were specified using the rotator method during the workshops on the first training day with the attendance of: the local government general education school teams consisting of 3 to 4 members, specialists of the different areas of DEC and the representatives of social partners. On the last training day the audience was also asked to take part in the writing of the summary of the event as well as in implementing the curricula of the schools. During the period between training days the teams compiled paragraphs from the curricula of their schools that were based on the agreements made within their schools. The possibility to have a consultation conducted by lecturers and other specialists of Tallinn University was offered for the teams. The use of an e-learning environment called IVA enabled and supported the learning process.</p>
<p><b>Assessment and evaluation of the outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the teams of the schools compiled their own projects of the general part of the curricula</li> <li>• the best practices of the schools were introduced.</li> <li>• the collaboration within and between the schools was intensified</li> <li>• the opportunities for cooperation between schools and institutions of local governments were specified.</li> <li>• additional training needs were revealed during the training.</li> <li>• the continuing training for the head teachers was carried out.</li> </ul> <p>The sustainability of the project shows interest in similar training in other local governments and a new programme is right now being prepared.</p>
<p><b>How did you measure the success?</b></p> <p><b>Virve Kinkar, project manager</b></p> <p><i>“The indicators of the success of this project were:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>satisfaction of the regional partner (the aims of the Department of Education and Culture of City Government of Pärnu were achieved – communication and collaboration between schools are better, use of the urban space as a learning environment is more effective and efficient, the renewal of the curriculum as teamwork has succeeded);</i></li> <li>• <i>a lot of follow-up activities have been born, inc. new training programmes based on the implementation of new curriculum and similar collaboration projects in other regions.”</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>The essential results and positive outcomes</b></p>	<p>Several things contributed to the success of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- - the cooperation with the client (subscriber) at the various stages of the project</li> <li>- - the organisational work and methods contributed to the achievement of the project outcomes.</li> <li>- - the optimal ratio of the theoretical approaches and individual (independent) work of the trainers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What factors supported the success of the project?</b></p> <p><b>Virve Kinkar, project manager</b></p> <p><i>„Success factors of large-scale (i.e. many themes, voluminous discussion work and independent</i></p>	

tasks, the number of participants) continuing education projects are in my opinion:

- co-operation with the partner (from clarifying the needs and expectations, elaborating them during the different phases of the process through to the analysis of results);
- flexibility (the need to change focus, methods etc);
- collecting the feedback from participants and partners **during** the process not only at the end (if possible also to use different methods to do it, so it does not become an unpleasant routine);
- partnership instead of customer and client relationship.

A Project manager should be able to act in different roles. Sometimes as an expert of public relations, sometimes as a facilitator and motivator, sometimes (although rarely) like an autocratic manager.“

<b>Problems and failures</b>	<p>The main challenges were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new topic and the approach to a new topic (new national curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools, all of the regional schools; participation within teams and the renewal of the curriculum with the team-members.</li> <li>- high level participation including all the partners</li> <li>- different motivation of the schools that participate.</li> <li>- restricted to a time limit (for many people it is hard to leave school simultaneously).</li> </ul> <p>What could have been done differently?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better informing the partners of the national curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools in order to better perceive their roles in the process of renewal and implementing of the curriculums.</li> <li>- More time in contact training days (e.g. full length of training days).</li> </ul>
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**What kind of risks should be taken into account to avoid the failure of co-operation?**

**Virve Kinkar, project manager**

“Main risks I see are:

- new form of learning, based on sharing the responsibility may lead to uncertainty and disagreement;
- a need to offer new knowledge and methods to schools who are very conservative and cautious to accept it is difficult and needs moving along step by step.“

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