

**CASE STUDY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE DIGNIFIED**

**University of Tartu &  
The Estonian Ministry of Education and Science,  
The City Government of Tartu**

**Information about the project**

Duration: From September 2010 until today  
 Project performer: University of Tartu, Lifelong Learning Centre  
 Project financier: University of Tartu, The City Government of Tartu  
 Project partners: The Estonian Ministry of Education and Science,  
 The City Government of Tartu

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

**Karmel Tall, project manager**

(The Project Manager of the Continuing Education and Training, The Lifelong Learning Centre)

*“It is wise to share experiences with people who have already done these kinds of projects. It is easy to have great new ideas, but much more difficult to ensure the sustainability of the project. In practice you have to be aware and ready to deal with very different questions, especially working older learners.”*

**Aim of the project**

The aim of the University of the Dignified at the University of Tartu is to enhance the contentment and coping skills of the citizens aged over 50 through the development of their awareness, personality and creativity.

**The project outline**

The University of Tartu has offered new and interesting study programmes to different target groups over the years and paid attention to the strategic value of regional collaboration. For instance, over the past two years the College of Narva of the University of Tartu has been managing the *Children's University Programme* in Narva and in Tartu. And as the age of the students studying at the University of Tartu ranged from 20 to 50, it seemed a natural process to widen the possibilities of lifelong learning to the citizens older than 50.

The continuing training program called the University of the Dignified was first started by the regional college of the University of Tartu in Pärnu. An enormous popularity of this programme in Pärnu gave the idea to initiate this kind of programme in other regions as well.

	<p>The project idea of <i>the University of the Dignified</i> is based on the principles of the Estonian policy for the elderly and the priorities of lifelong learning of the University of Tartu. One of the objectives of the Estonian policy for the elderly is to create the opportunities for supporting elderly people to be more self-sufficient. The policy is based on the international principle „Society for everyone!“ and on the comprehension that everyone, regardless of his/her age has the opportunity to be an active citizen and participate in community life. One of the priorities of the University of Tartu is the development of lifelong learning and the lifelong learning provision to different target groups.</p> <p>The topics of the lectures of the University of the Dignified consist of legislation, news of science, economy, the spiritual and physical health, culture etc. There are also good practitioners and experts among the lecturers as well as the professors and scientists of the University of Tartu.</p> <p>The study takes place in the form of a lecture, mainly 2 times a month. The length of one contact learning session is 2x45 minutes, in other words 2 academic hours. In addition to short-term courses there are also longer-term language and culture courses being organised and 1-day outings planned in the spring and summer period.</p> <p>The participants of The University of the Dignified programme have been actively involved in the process of selecting topics and their suggestions have significantly been taken into consideration.</p>
<p><b>Assessment and evaluation of the outcomes of the project</b></p>	<p>The best indicator of the project results is the involvement of the participants. Already 320 participants have been registered w and about 75 to 78% of the participants are regularly present in lectures. The number of applicants wishing to participate is continuously increasing and is related to how the information is spreading among the communities.</p>
<p><b>How did you measure the success?</b> <b>Karmel Tall, project manager</b></p>	<p><i>“The growth in the number of participants and feedback were the indicators of the success of the project. Feedback indicated that most of the learners were satisfied or very satisfied with the lectures. Participants made many suggestions for next lectures and most of them are taken into account. The number of participants has grown from 320 to 454 people in Tartu region. Project is expanded also to Tallinn where there are about 300 learners.”</i></p>
<p><b>The essential results and positive outcomes</b></p>	<p>At the moment it can surely be said that this project is a great success because the interest in this programme is constantly growing and the feedback has been only positive so far. Certainly the satisfaction with the programme has guaranteed the clarification of the participant's training needs, e.g. on the topics that they would</p>

	<p>like to see on the programme and that could be used for further developments. The professional level of the presenters is also an important factor that indicates success.</p> <p>The greatest acknowledgement so far is the successful nomination of this project to Achievement of the Year 2010 in Tartu - they won this award from the Tartu City Government.</p>
<p><b>What factors supported the success of the project?</b>  <b>Karmel Tall, project manager</b>  <i>„Supportive factors of succeeding the project were:</i>  <i>positive attitude of partners (specially The City Government of Tartu);</i>  <i>warm welcome of society and media;</i>  <i>rapid expansion of information (no need to invest resources for the advertising);</i>  <i>provision of academic lectures (feedback has shown that this kind of lectures were missed from society).”</i></p>	
<p><b>Problems and failures</b></p>	<p>No significant problems have occurred in the organization of work and administration. From time to time there are some points on misleading information about the dates and places of the lectures as well as the misinterpretation of information by the participants. In the context of the target group of the project it is extremely important to deliver information accurately, precisely and long enough before the lecture/event begins. So far we have compiled the lecture plan every semester, however in the future the lecture plan has to be made for the whole academic year.</p> <p>In the beginning of the project there was the plan to expand to other regions as well but for the time being no necessary resources have yet been found.</p>
<p><b>What kind of risks should be taken into account to avoid the failure of co-operation?</b>  <b>Karmel Tall, project manager</b>  <i>“It is crucial to find right lecturers. Professors are not always practical and attractive teachers and the lectures might be too theoretical and "far from life". It is important to take care of resources and the sustainability of project. Also the learning environment should be very supportive – room with very good acoustics and visible power point slides. All administrative factors should also be well organised.”</i></p>	
<p><b>Contacts of the presenter of the case</b></p>	<p>Karmel Tall  The Lifelong Learning Centre of The University of Tartu  The Project Manager of the Continuing Education and Training  Phone: +372 737 6614  E-mail: <a href="mailto:karmel.tall@ut.ee">karmel.tall@ut.ee</a></p>