

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PROJECT

A Story of Success



Editors

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International Military Leadership Academy Project: A Story of Success



Foreword

The Strategy on European Union Level

As a reaction to the threats and challenges for the European Union (EU), the European Security Strategy (ESS) was adopted in 2003.¹ This ESS referred to organized crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, terrorism, and state failure. In 2008, the EU created a report on the implementation of the ESS based on an evaluation of the implemented measures.² Cyber security, climate change, and energy security were added. Within this report, it was clearly stated that all these threats and challenges request a broadness of measures integrating military and civilian actions. The concept of the ‘comprehensive approach’ – later renamed to ‘integrated approach’ was developed; the armed forces were foreseen to have a prominent role in crisis management starting from the early (military) decision-making process (MDMP).

To prepare future armed forces Officers for their duty after graduation within an international European environment, the necessity for a common education at the basic Officer education level was stressed. Finally – during the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union – on 10 and 11 November 2008, all 27 EU Ministers of Defense approved during their Council Meeting a document, which was the ‘founding paper’ and the mandate for the Military Erasmus (EMILYO) Implementation Group with the official name ‘European initiative for the exchange of young officers inspired by Erasmus’.³

¹ Council of the European Union, European Security Strategy – A Secure Europe in a Better World, (Brussels: ISBN 978-92-824-2421-62003, 2003), Passim.

² Council of the European Union, Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy – Providing Security in a Changing World, (Brussels: Document S407/08, 2008), Passim.

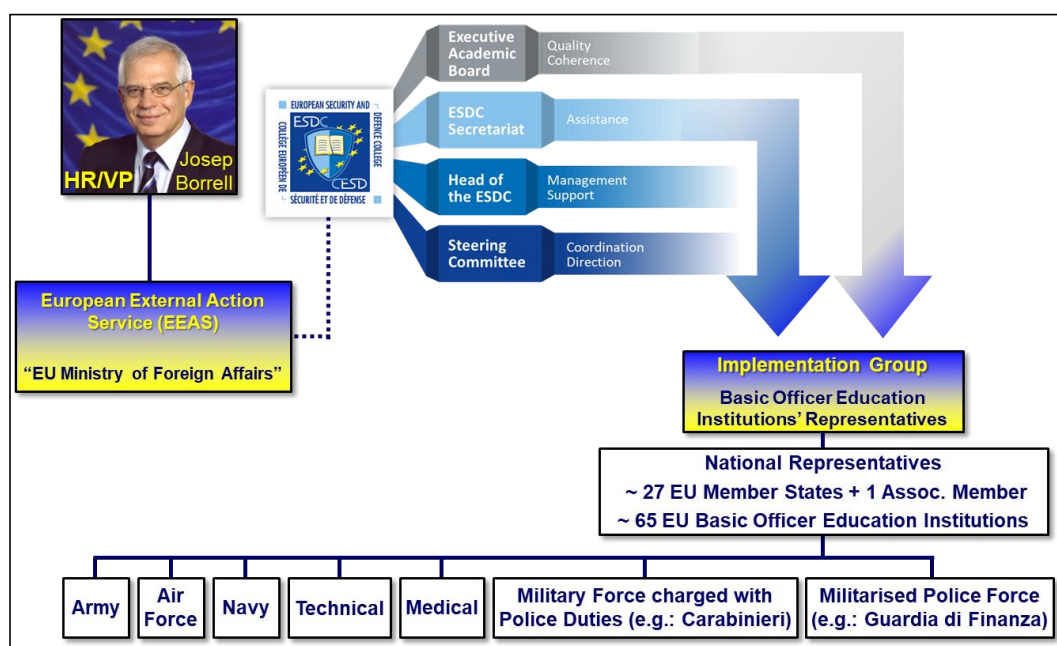
³ Council of the European Union, 2903rd meeting of the Council – General Affairs and External Relations. Council Decision, (Brussels: Document 15396/08, 2008), p. 5.



Picture 1: Press briefing, Council on External Relations, 10 and 11 November 2008.
(Photo: Council of the European Union).

The document clearly expressed that the initiative should develop interoperability during the initial officer training due to specific national characteristics and traditions. The recommended measures should therefore not be seen as an attempt to standardize the entire education, but more as a way of reducing the differences that might hamper the mobility of students and teaching staff by harmonizing the curricula.

The EU recognized the potential of the Military Erasmus (EMILYO) Implementation Group (IG) as an important contribution to a Security and Defence Culture. From the very beginning the IG was linked to the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) as one of the Executive Academic Board's (EAB) configurations.



Picture 2: The structure of the Military Erasmus (EMILYO) Implementation Group.
(Graph created by the author).

The Implementation Group's Objectives

The overall goal of the IG is to harmonize the European Union Basic Officer Education and to increase interoperability, thus increasing Europe's security. With all its activities, the IG promotes a European Security and Defence Culture, spreading the idea among the Officer Cadets and students participating in the Basic Officer Education (BOE) and in the security field, that current and future challenges can be much better managed together. This goes hand in hand with an education for the Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Each European Union Basic Officer Education Institution (EU BOEI) is embedded in the national academic education system. This fact creates challenges that have to be overcome without undermining the respective national accreditation. To solve the problems, it is foreseen that each EU BOEI sends education experts to the IG meetings. Each EU BOEI, which participates in IG meetings, has a voice to contribute ideas and is able to implement – step by step, on a voluntary basis – the IG's elaborations. All the developments are in line with the Bologna-Process, the Erasmus+ approaches, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and other pre-conditions for

the European Higher Education Area (HEA). Moreover, the elaborations also leave space for the non-academic vocational education field.



Picture 3: 50th IG meeting in Brasov/Romania in June 2021.
(Photo: “Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy).

The IG categorized the challenges into 15 so-called “Lines of Development” (LoDs), among them the creation of common modules, international semesters for Land Forces, Air Forces, Naval Forces, the technical and medical fields, research & development, and how to finance all the activities.

Since the IG has no own budget available, from the very beginning it was foreseen to use external funds, such as ERASMUS+ with all its possibilities, mainly using funds for exchanges and funds for Strategic Partnership Projects (SPP). The later SPP ‘International Military Leadership Academy’ (IMLA) was totally in line with the IG’s strategic objectives – namely interoperability, harmonizing the EU basic officer education, and promoting a European Security and Defence Culture – by merging all these circumstances with financial issues. Moreover, by creating four new common modules, the IMLA contributed directly to the LoD 8, the creation of common modules.

Conferences linked to the Implementation Group’s Objectives

The LoD 6 is dedicated to the promotion of the IG’s goals. The fact that decision-makers – such as Ministers of Defense, Chiefs of General Staff of Rectors, (Rector-) Commandants, and Superintendents – change their position on a regular basis makes it necessary to inform them on a regular basis. One of the conferences is the annual European Military Academies Commandants’ Seminar (EUMACS)

which takes place in that country that holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and which is open for all services. During this conference, the decision-makers are informed about the IG's achievements and are requested to discuss guidelines for the IG for the upcoming academic year.



Picture 4: The annual EUMACS in Portugal in May 2021.
(Photo: Portuguese Military Academy).

Also on an annual basis, the international Military Academy Forum (iMAF) takes place. This working conference on the education experts' level provides room for elaborations that are linked to the IG's challenges.

Starting with an agreement among five BOEIs from Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania in 2014 – in the meanwhile 22 institutions from 13 countries declared their willingness to sign the iMAF agreement in 2021. This will definitely have a positive effect on the speed of the IG's elaborations. Among other developments, the iMAF provides possibilities for the dissemination of projects, as also realized for the IMLA project.



Picture 5: The last pre-COVID iMAF in Austria in May 2019.
(Photo: Theresan Military Academy).

The respective Lines of Development chairpersons may organize LoD-specific meetings – or even have to do so by organizing Multiplier Events if embedded into a Strategic Partnership Project. The LoD meetings are specially geared to the respective LoD topics, such as the development of an international semester for specific services.



Picture 6: The latest LoD meeting, an LoD 12 Multiplier Event for the creation of an International Air Force Semester in June 2021.
(Photo: “Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy).

The IMLA Strategic Partnership Project

Taking the contents of all the above-mentioned chapters into consideration, it can clearly be stated that the IMLA project is 100% in line with the IG's goals! The three basic officer education institutions, which were part of the project – the Hellenic Army Academy, the Portuguese Military Academy, and the Polish Military University of Land Forces – are within the IG not only role-models for exchanges, but they also contributed to the creation of four new important common modules to the overall IG's mandate.

Reaching from Crisis Management – through Leadership in Communication and Leadership, Motivation and Influence – to Stress Management, the modules contribute a lot to the IG's goal of harmonizing the EU basic officer education and will have a positive effect on more exchanges on Officer Cadets' level.

By using the external funds of Erasmus+, the IMLA project was also in line with the IG's philosophy of using external funds for the elaborations.

Congratulations on this project, now it is up to the European basic officer education institutions to implement all or some of the IMLA common modules to benefit from the excellent elaborations. The dissemination of the IMLA project by creating a book is an outstanding idea for faster implementation, for which I wish all the best.

Colonel Associated Professor Harald GELL, PhD, MSc, MSD, MBA
Chairman of the Implementation Group of the EU

Introduction

What is a project? Why do people create projects and embark on seemingly endless years packed with a multitude of tasks; piles of administrative papers that appear to be death sentences when not filled out in due time; long, short, medium all sorts of duration meetings and pages of meaningless acronyms without which (apparently) no project could survive?

What is the reason behind every application to get projects funded and above all approved by some superior instance who has the power of offering the gift of life or the curse of death to people's most genial ideas?

What moves people to be willing to work in teams, especially when teams are made up of citizens from different nations, with different languages, preconceptions and working habits, ways of acting, and, mainly, different ways of thinking and facing reality?

What drives people into action when it comes to project planning? Certainly, each person reading these lines will have their own ideas and answers to each of the above questions. Still, it might be worth trying to find a common ground in responses to those questions to explain why the Strategic Partnership Project International Military Leadership Academy (IMLA) came up and, most importantly, why it became a case of success and the authors of this book decided to write about it in the following chapters.

Ideas are nothing but dreams until they get materialized and dreams are just figments of our imagination that tend to vanish from our thoughts as soon as we wake up...unless we put our thoughts into action. In that case, this means that dreams grew into ideas that took shape in the form of objectives to be reached and accomplished. This was the case with IMLA and it can be said that the dream came true in the best possible way, once the main goals of the project were all crossed out of the initially planned list.

After the idea for the IMLA project came up, on the side of the Polish team from the Military University of Land Forces, the first challenge to face was to materialize that idea by inviting partners to share the will to turn it into a reality. The challenge was accepted: two partner institutions, one from Portugal (Portuguese

Military Academy) and the other from Greece (Hellenic Army Academy) joined the Polish team and the real adventure started. It was time to fill out the application form to have the project approved and funded to start working on it.

When applying for the approval and funding of IMLA, the main worries had to do with the credibility of the proposals inserted in the application form. Credibility in terms of perceiving how relevant our objectives would sound to the project assessors from the Erasmus Agency. The truth is, it is not an easy task for a military university to compete on the same terms as civilian universities which are years ahead as far as experience in applying for Erasmus Partnership projects is concerned. Still, one may say it is certainly challenging and it gave us the chance to reflect more thoroughly and in a wiser way on the objectives we were proposing to commit to.

The two first challenges were won and the time came to face the truth: three teams from three different countries with apparently nothing in common but a will to materialize the International Military Leadership Academy had to come to terms with much more than they had initially foreseen. A transnational strategic partnership project is about a lot more than great ideas nicely transposed into paper. This type of project means having numerous tasks to accomplish within really tight schedules carefully distributed and previously agreed upon by all participants in the process. The IMLA project proved to be much more than just that, though.

Apart from these infinite tasks, there were the almost absurd (at first, they looked and sounded like that) transnational project meetings, which meant traveling to each partner's countries to meet in person and discuss every task face to face, culture to culture, if one may say.

The successful outcomes of Transnational Strategic Partnerships depend a great deal on the success of transnational project meetings. It is during these initial combats that should turn into pleasant plenary discussions that the final shape of every part of the project is traced. It has to do with understanding differences of opinions and mentalities; engaging with solutions we never thought could be possible before; being ready to accept changes; defending your points of view until you perceive it can simply be defeated by better ones; with admitting that accepting the difference in others, our divergent ways can also be accepted by others and even applauded by them.

Mainly, what moves people willing to work with teams of diverse origin is exactly the possibility of being in contact with diversity in thoughts and meaning, and knowledge that is mostly possible due to the diversity of cultures and identities inside those teams.

What propelled people to apply for the materialization of a Strategic Partnership Project such as IMLA was the will to work together with people who had different backgrounds, different visions, and ways of working around the same subject to enrich that subject and make it even stronger and more relevant amongst other common partners.

The bottom line might be that what drove the IMLA Project Team into action was to follow a dream which was an idea that, thanks to all participants in the project materialized into a project and came true. That was the dream of uniting people in the quest for a more noble goal than just that of an accomplished project: the will to contribute to a more united and common European basic officer education system and this dream we are proud to say came true even before the project completion. Therefore, when asking yourself for the core reason for creating projects, make sure those core reasons are aligned with your core values. Then, and only then, should you feel at ease to embark on them.

Throughout the chapters of this book, we give you a collection of our memories and experiences from this journey and adventure we lived for over two years. We will lead you through various aspects of the project, sometimes reaching back to our earlier endeavors, telling you how much we have learned and what mistakes we made (so you do not need to repeat them), and good practices you may find useful to follow. You will also find here both shades and difficulties we came across, along with the victories and joys of the great small international IMLA Family that we became thanks to this project.

The co-authors and editors, all participants of the IMLA project, came together again to create this book with the hope that you would enjoy it and use it during your own projects to make changes happen and also to try to make other lives better.

Editors

Anna Maciejewska (Zamiar-Ziolkowska)

Our path to Strategic Partnership, Friendship, and Family

Abstract

The Chapter refers to the background of the Strategic Partnership project “International Military Leadership Academy” – one of the biggest educational initiatives coordinated and executed by three European military academies. The author is focusing on the genesis of the project’s idea, as well as carefully describes reasons why partner military institutions decided to apply for external funds and execute such complex activity aimed at competence development among military students – future officers of European countries. The chapter describes partners’ way to Strategic Partnership project through other international activities like the Intensive Program (2013), Standard Grant of IVF (2013-2014), and International Semester (2015-2017).

The chapter presents the sequential and comprehensive realization of the vision throughout various international endeavors. Starting from careful analysis of needs and identification of gaps, through both simple and bold solution proposals, innovative approaches, and years of leading the effort, the author – the project manager of those projects tells the story of mechanics behind the application and budget creation, selecting partners, the application process, winning the competitions, learning the lessons and implementing best practices into the next projects and programs. In the process, she is not avoiding presenting difficulties and obstacles during the realization of the projects but gives examples of good practices to follow and mistakes not to repeat. The story of success.

At the beginning, there is always the question “Why”, “What for” or “What was the reason that some people were willing to take a huge effort to help others? Working at the Military Academy of Land Forces (MALF, later Military University of Land Forces – MULF)⁴, at the Department of International Cooperation and Public Affairs, I was mainly responsible for international cooperation including Erasmus+ Program. What I would like to highlight here is that, at the very beginning of the Erasmus+ Program at MALF, it was mainly dedicated to civilian students (MULF is one of five military higher education institutions in Poland, which offers civilian studies

⁴ In 2017, the Military Academy of Land Forces (MALF) has changed its academic status and became the Military University of Land Forces (MULF).

as well). Therefore, the same institution is running bachelor's and master's degree programs for both future officers and civilians.

Civilian students were able to join the Program without any limitations. Thus, they participated in numerous exchange activities and followed their curricula on partners' academies for a semester or even longer. Additionally to that, they could also take advantage of other forms of exchanges and spend some time abroad on practices in various military, public and private institutions.

Erasmus+ Program (before 2014, known as the Lifelong Learning Program) was more and more popular among the Polish academic community. Civilian students who returned from their mobility were satisfied and they shared positive feedback with their peers, including their military colleagues. In consequence military students started visiting the Erasmus Office and asking for the possibility to take part in the exchanges and enrich their national training/education with programs offered by different military academies in Europe. It was a trigger for the Erasmus Office to start preparation for military student mobility arrangements in the nearest future.

First of all, we had asked ourselves as well as the academy's authorities what were the main challenges that we have to face and obstacles to overcome in order to make the military students' mobility a reality. What has to be done in advance regarding a study programs' unification (alignment) so their learning effects could be fully recognized by the European military education community (basic officer education institutions) participating in the Erasmus+ Program.

Very soon, we discovered that the double education standards are the most problematic issue, which caused limitations to military students' mobility. Military academies in the EU that are focused on future officers' preparation have to fulfill the requirements and expectations of at least two stakeholders – on the civilian side the ministries of higher education and (which is most important) the ministries of defense⁵. As a result of having two supervisory bodies involved in a university curricula creation, accreditation, and evaluation, military programs end up with having much more didactic hours per each level of study in order to fulfill educational requirements compared to their civilian colleagues from similar academic tracks. It is

⁵ It differs from country to country. Usually, the accreditation for academic programs comes from a civilian authority such as a ministry of higher education, whereas officership development and platoon leader training requirements originate from the services or even from a ministry of defense.

an outcome of the situation where both stakeholders force their requirements and expectations, at the same time not allowing extinction of the study period (e.g. four years instead of three years for the first cycle/bachelor studies). Moreover, each military academy/university in Europe has a different specialization and different requirements regarding national law, military procedures, and regulations. Generalizing we can easily state that military programs have almost twice the number of didactic hours in comparison to civilian programs.

Therefore, it was really difficult to find mobility windows in bachelor's or master's degree studies, during which military students could learn and practice abroad. When we were writing down our thoughts and started to think about possible projects or activities that could support military students in gaining experience abroad, we found out that there were three main challenges that we had to deal with:

- More didactic hours in their curricula (compared to “civilian” study programs) – “too heavy” programs, limited time available for mobility during the study period;
- Lack of common education/training programs that would allow mutual recognition of learning outcomes/effects – need to find compromises or equivalencies;
- Not mature “mobility culture” in higher military education institutions that differs in scope, goals, rules across the EU and beyond.

It was quite obvious for the Military Academy of Land Forces and its Erasmus Office that we had to start preparations for small, evolutionary changes that would eventually lead us to common curricula in which learning effects could be recognized by most military academies in Europe. We had a deep understanding that these changes have to be introduced incrementally, starting from short cycle courses aiming at more mature and complex education and training programs.

Finally, we believed that all our activities, sooner or later, will create closer cooperation between military academies in Europe, establish new standards in the area of military student mobility and make it much easier and more transparent in the future.

Peace Support Operations as a Challenge for EU and International Community Project

The first initiative that we decided to take on, was focused on creating a short mobility cycle that could be executed during the winter or vacation break (between semesters), outside of the regular curriculum. Thanks to that, participation in this kind of mobility did not affect existing study and training activities and allowed military students to gain some additional ECTS points that military academies could fully recognize or add to their diploma supplements.

It was 2012 when we started our preparations for the first international project sponsored by the Erasmus Program. To avoid obvious obstacles, we invited our existing partners to cooperate in this endeavor – academies that already had the Erasmus Charter, and similarly to us just started gaining their first experience in the area of military students' mobility.

In fact, the story behind that was very simple. I started by asking questions directed to young officers – teachers and instructors from MALF – who were taking a very active part in the international cooperation, but since then on the purely military ground: What topics and competencies are or could be common for different armies? What could we do together for a group of military students from different countries and cultures? What competencies could be essential for them and could be recognized by their home institutions? Then, two officers from MALF came up with the idea of the Peace Support Operation Course – as a common knowledge and competencies that all soldiers taking part in peace support operations are supposed to have.

We organized a meeting with the representatives of future partner institutions and during a few days of meeting face to face and exchanging emails, we developed a program of an intensive course on peace support operations dedicated to cadets. We agreed that assumed learning effects to achieve, as well as skills and competencies that we wanted to develop among students, are common for each nation. After that, we made a decision that we will try to apply for Erasmus Program grants for project execution.

Project that we decided to apply for was conducted under the umbrella of the Lifelong Learning Program in 2012 and 2013. Together with General Jonas Zemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, the University of Defense in the Czech Republic, and Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Stefanik in Slovakia, the Military

Academy of Land Forces as a partnership leader, prepared the project called: *“Peace Support Operations as a Challenge for EU and International Community”*.

As mentioned earlier, the project was focused on the creation of a short cycle of training for an international group of military students, and additionally to develop a mutual understanding, knowledge, and skills of future European Union officers related to the multinational cooperation in conducting military peace support operations. According to the partnership agreement, each institution contributed to the organization of the course and sent 12 students and 4 academic teachers that participated in the project. The intensive program as such was held in June and July 2013 (21 consecutive days) in Wroclaw (Poland) at the Military Academy of Land Forces.

The course covered the implementation of more than 121 training hours in form of lectures, workshops and exercises, practical training, simulation games, and field exercises. The didactic methods introduced during the course execution were aimed at activating students and involving them in continuous dialogue and close cooperation between nations. During the classes, teachers were focusing their efforts on developing practical and soft skills (e.g. communication, and negotiations) among students. Moreover, a lot of time was dedicated to collaborative problem-solving activities, which are vital for task execution during the peace support operation mission.

The course consisted of a theoretical part (lectures, workshops, work in groups) and practical field exercises carried out on MALF premises and training center. Those 121 hours of training were aimed at achieving the following learning outcomes:

- Understanding of the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union;
- Broadening the knowledge of students on the specifics of the EU-led peace support operations;
- Developing the skills necessary to work in a multinational military environment.

Modules that were carried on during this three-week intensive program were conducted collaboratively by teachers from each partner military academy. Therefore,

we had an international group of students taught and trained by the international group of teachers in

- Military English in PSO (Peace Support Operations);
- Institutionalization of International Security;
- Contemporary Armed Conflicts;
- International Humanitarian Law and International Law of Armed Conflicts;
- International Security Strategy and Military Relations;
- NATO Military Maps Symbols;
- Rules of Engagement (ROE) in PSO;
- Negotiations in PSO;
- Land navigation with map;
- Land navigation with GPS;
- NATO Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations and PSO Concept;
- Contemporary Peacekeeping Operations;
- Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) in PSO;
- Tactical engagement simulation (TESEX) in PSO.
- Leadership and Ethics in PSO;
- Staff work in PSO;
- PSO communication voice procedures.

During the weekends students also participated in cultural programs and sports competitions aimed at strengthening cooperation and better understanding of each nation and culture.

The course was summarized by a two-part evaluation process: Exercises “Peacekeeper” and “Team Run”. Positive completion of this course granted each student with 5 ECTS points that were recognized by academies taking part in the project.

Project *“Peace Support Operations as a Challenge for EU and International Community”* was the first step to the creation of more and more mature and complex

modules and study programs that could be essential for military education institutions in Europe.

The Peace Support Operations Course became a permanent education offer of the Military Academy of Land Forces in Wroclaw, and since 2013, although in adjusted and revised form, is being organized annually with participants (both students and teachers) from Europe, the United States, and beyond⁶.

V4 project Better cooperation for better operation of the future Visegrad EU Battle Group

Following the successful application and execution of the international project realized within the framework of LLP Erasmus Program in 2012, where the Polish Military Academy of Land Forces was the leader of the consortium of military academies from the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Slovakia, the Wroclaw's academy decided again to respond to the needs of military higher education. This time in a somewhat research and didactic approach.

The emergence of the European military cooperation, both EU-wide and regional, in the shape of EU battlegroups needed updating and upgrading educational programs for future officers. One of those ideas was the creation of the Visegrad EU Battlegroup which was to serve not only as the instrument of EU power but also as a vehicle for tighter cooperation between countries of the Visegrad Group or simply V4 (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia).

The aim of this three-part project, partly funded by the Standard Grant of the International Visegrad Fund (IVF), was to compare the systems of officers' education in the V4 countries and to present recommendations in the context of the future Visegrad European Union Battlegroup. The project outcomes were to enhance cooperation among officers of V4 countries in the future peace and crisis response operations primarily, but not exclusively, conducted by the European Union. The project aimed at improving the programs of future officers' preparation for operating within multinational military structures.

⁶ The original program of the PSO Course was adjusted to post-project execution and is annually reviewed in order to meet the requirements of changing security environment of multinational peace and stability operation. Currently, based on the original idea and updated program, the course under the new name "International Military Leadership Course" is the main international training activity offered by the MULF.

Bringing this project to life was somewhat different from the previous one. This was because there was a direct task from the academy's leadership to organize a conference focused on the officer education systems and exercises involving V4 countries' military academies. One of the difficulties was the framework and funding. The obvious limitation of the four countries significantly reduced the possibility to use existing EU programs. However, the team recognized this top-down initiative as the opportunity to continue their strife for stronger and more vibrant mobility programs for cadets. We have decided to use regional funding for the IVF, although the Fund had never sponsored military projects. With the use of our experience from the previous projects and existing bilateral and multilateral relations with military academies from V4 Group countries, we constructed the project that allowed us to continue boosting our mobilities for cadets and to satisfy the academy's leadership needs for stronger international cooperation with regional partners.

Despite good preparations and experience, we did not avoid obstacles and difficulties of international cooperation such as language barrier, different legal and financial regulations, and misunderstandings.

Following our ideas and overarching goals of international cooperation and cadet mobility we described the target group and stakeholders of the project as

- Cadets to verify their knowledge, skills, and competencies of operating in the multinational environment;
- Military faculty/officers to observe cadets cooperating in a specially designed military scenario and therefore modify military education and training accordingly;
- Military higher education institutions to improve their systems of education and training to increase interoperability of future officers deployed within the framework of Visegrad Battle Group or other international organizations such as the UN, EU or NATO;
- Armed forces of Visegrad countries conducting common military exercises to strengthen the V4 partnership.
- Joint military units executing crisis response tasks.

The project partners expected the following outputs upon the completion of the Project:

- Providing solutions to problems that hinder Visegrad Group's cooperation in the multinational environment;
- Recommending education modules possible for a quick introduction to the existing programs to increase interoperability of future officers deploying within the framework of the Visegrad Battlegroup or other international institutions such as the UN or NATO;
- Publication of the monograph consisting of the presentation of partner institutions' educational programs, description of assumptions and results of the conducted experiment, and recommendations for educational programs⁷;
- Development of experiment scenario that could be reused for further education and evaluation of cadets' progress in the field of international military cooperation, beyond of the test group;
- Strengthening academic cooperation between project partners.

The workshops, the experiment, and the conference were integral parts of the project. The workshops were devoted to comparing military systems of education in all partner institutions and to shaping the experiment for a multinational group of cadets. The experiment was a military synthetic (computer simulation-based) exercise conducted in a multinational environment. Each project partner provided two officers for the workshops (authoring and steering team), whose task was to prepare the exercise scenario; as well as four cadets and two officers for the exercise supported by a computer simulation system VirtualBattleSpace2 (VBS2) and conducted in Brno, Czech Republic.

The third part of the project was the conference organized and conducted by the project leader in Wrocław, Poland. The main aim of the conference was to present the results of the experiment and discuss the proposals for educational programs in order to better prepare new officers for future deployments within prospected EU Visegrad Battlegroup, as well as in frameworks of other international organizations (e.g. UN, UE, NATO). Partner institutions representatives presented

⁷ *Better cooperation for better operation of the future Visegrad EU Battle Group*, ed. Marek Kulczycki, WSOWL, Wrocław 2013.

their national officer education systems and the results of the experiment. Additionally, experts – the practitioners, presented their knowledge and experience from cooperation in the multinational environment during operations.

Although the successful closing of the project, it was not free from the challenges and risks. Some of them even had become issues that the project team had to deal with at various stages of the project. The project team collected a number of valuable lessons that enriched their experience and helped in the realization of later international projects. It is important to mention that conducting projects resulting from bottom-up ideas in the military education institution is a challenge in itself. Those organizations are very hierarchical, strictly following the regulations and chain of command, as well as having well-embedded habits and customs, which makes them resistant to changes. That's why such initiatives need support from top leadership to surpass "natural and man-made obstacles" that slow down and complicate or sometimes even hamper usually simple things that are needed to execute the project.

Other types of challenges resulted from the availability of sufficiently prepared cadre and cadets for partner institutions, financial and organizational obligations of partners, and the international nature of the project, as well as the fact that it was the first-ever funding granted to the military institution by the International Visegrad Fund.

One of many important observations was that the more previous experience with a multinational environment, the more confident cadets were during the exercise. Therefore, it is paramount for all military academy decision-makers to enable their cadets to face international cooperation and training as soon as possible, and as many times as possible. Another one was that a cadet's self-confidence was hampered by the language barrier. When they realized that communication skills are based more on the willingness to understand each other than on language proficiency and vast vocabulary, they performed better in the operation. They were focused more on the task, than on the grammar. It needs training and experience, thus more opportunities in this regard must be created for cadets.

As a result, the military education institutions involved in the project extended the scope of cooperation in the field of training cadets and students (in bilateral cooperation, the Erasmus Program, and multilateral projects). The project strengthened and developed further joint cooperation and stimulated the networking

between teachers, students, and experts of partner academies from the V4 countries. The project has enhanced cooperation within the prospective EU Visegrad Battle Group planned for 2014. The results of the project served as a basis for constructing a common training module, which supplemented the existing educational programs for preparing future officers for multinational crisis response operations.

What is worth mentioning is that this project was relatively small in scope, length, and budget (overall budget of 20 000 EUR), but brought invaluable benefits in form of outputs and experience used in future projects. This V4 project was built on the success and experience from the execution of the PSO Course Project and is the best example of the gradual increase of international cooperation between military education institutions that largely affected military officers' education landscape in the EU.

International Strategic Partnership Project Creating International Semester regarding military education needs for future officers in Europe

When we had completed two projects focused mainly on short cycles of education, we started to think about something bigger, something that could be recognized as a more complex educational offer for military students.

It was also a time when MALF, thanks to those two projects described above, was the only military education institution experienced with applying for Erasmus+ and international grants oriented on education.

We started to meet regularly with other military academy representatives taking part in different scientific, as well as military conferences and forums focused on strengthening cooperation between military institutions on the European level. With no doubts, the Implementation Group chaired by Colonel Harrold Gell and International Military Academy Forum (IMAF) triggered the third international project, this time again under the Erasmus Program, led by the Military Academy of Land Forces.

In 2013-2014, discussions about the common semester for military students started. Military academy representatives agreed that this semester should be taught and executed in the future as a mobility window for cadets. Therefore topics/modules that would be part of such a semester should be essential for all military academies in Europe.

In 2015, during the IMAF organized by Nicolae Balcescu Land Forces Academy in Sibiu in Romania, representatives of numerous military education institutions started deep diving into their curricula in order to find commonalities and identify those competencies that could be trained not only at the home institution but also during the mobility windows organized by partners academies.

The idea of a common International Semester for the European Officer was born. The participants of the IMAF 2015 elaborated on a set of competencies that cadets should acquire in an International Semester in order to improve their abilities and skills to act both in a civilian and a military international environment. As a result of deep-diving activities, a list of potential common modules and learning outcomes were created.

MALF as an institution experienced with the Erasmus project proposed an idea of applying for an Erasmus grant dedicated to a detailed program of common semester development as well as the development of didactic materials needed in its education process. Moreover, funds for the pilot edition of the international semester were also considered and included in the application, which also was a result of the gained experience from the previous projects.

The project titled *Creating International Semester regarding military education needs for future officers in Europe* was executed in Erasmus + Program, Action 2 – Strategic Partnership. The proposal of the project was sent by MULF to the National Agency of Erasmus+ Program and finally got very high marks from evaluation experts. There were 72 applications submitted in Call of the proposal in 2015, and only 11 were granted funding – the project “*Creating international semester regarding military education needs for future officers in Europe*” was among the three best-graded projects with a budget to support its execution.

The partnership built for project purposes consisted of 5 Military Academies in Europe:

1. Military Academy of Land Forces in Wroclaw (Poland) – as a leader of the Partnership.
2. Theresian Military Academy (Austria).
3. University of Defense (Czech Republic).
4. National University of Public Service (Hungary).

5. Nicolae Balcescu Land Forces Academy (Romania).

Two out of the four above-mentioned institutions had already been involved in previous projects. Therefore, they had experience in cooperation with MALF and project execution from the formal point of view (financial/program/national and international rules and directives). The duration of the project was foreseen for two years and the project goals were described by Partnership as follows:

- developing a common program of education in the field of *Essential European military officer qualifications*;
- developing educational materials – website, e-books, e-learning courses, new methods of exchanging military students;
- increasing cooperation between institutions.

The first one and half years were dedicated mainly to developing the description of the modules (knowledge, skills, competencies), didactic materials, and e-learning courses. The last phase of the project was focused on a pilot run of the international semester, a detailed evaluation of all activities (including didactic materials, classes conducted in person, and virtual mobility), and necessary program and intellectual outputs adjustments and changes resulting from the evaluation outcomes and identified gaps.

Project implementation was based on four main activities:

- Transnational Meetings organized by four partner institutions aimed at developing the program of common educational modules;
- Intellectual Outputs (three types: descriptions of modules/course cards, e-books, e-learning content);
- Multiplier Events (two conferences at MALF and UoD) to share and disseminate the project ideas and results;
- Pilot run of the International Semester in the form of blended mobility – nine on-line learning modules, short mobility in two hosting institutions at the beginning of test semester, and two-week-long Intensive Course in Poland) to test a practical part of a common program.

The main output of the project that we delivered together with partner academies was a common program (supported by e-books and e-learning materials for further use) of the International Semester. The program consisted of the following modules⁸:

1. CM Basic Military English (2 ECTS).
2. CM Comprehensive Approach (4 ECTS).
3. CM Law of Armed Conflicts (2 ECTS).
4. CM Cultural Awareness (2 ECTS).
5. CM Cultural Communication (2 ECTS).
6. CM Cyber Security (2 ECTS).
7. CM Electronic Warfare (2 ECTS).
8. CM Interoperability (6 ECTS).
9. CM Military Leadership A, B, C (8 ECTS).

All modules that have been developed within the project had received the Common Module status (a decision given by the IG in December 2016).

From my personal point of view, the project was completed with great success – both from the formal side (finance and reports sent to the National Agency of Erasmus+ Program), as well as on the didactic part – finally we had complete program of common semester accompanied by didactic materials ready to be adapted by any military academy or university in Europe.

However, frankly speaking, it was not an easy job to lead this project. From my perspective as the project coordinator, during those two years of close cooperation, meetings, phone talks, and mail correspondence I had encountered a lot of friction, misunderstandings, and quarrels caused by ineffective communication, language barrier, different national regulations, and perceptions. Sometimes negotiations between partners were really complicated and full of various (very often conflicting) emotions. I have even remembered the situation, that once we were on a verge of ceasing the Partnership and termination of the project. Fortunately however for all of our sake, at the end of the day, we were always able to find compromises and

⁸ CM – Common Module – an agreed at the EU level form of the training/education course or short-cycle activity focused on the development of certain knowledge, skills, and competencies, representing a common area for all basic officer education institutions of the EU. The common module status is awarded to the program after the completion of the necessary procedure and unequivocal acceptance of the Implementation Group.

solutions that allowed us to push forward and accomplish the assumed goals. From the time perspective, I can tell why. I think that the success of this story belongs to the people involved in project execution. Each of us was really focused on project goals and was deeply devoted to the idea of the common semester. We knew that we are doing this for young, smart, and ambitious cadets who, thanks to us, would have an opportunity to study and practice abroad, just like their civilian colleagues.

This was the reason we were always able to find solutions, even on quite complicated problems and we pushed forward all activities planned for the project. I think that, despite all our differences, we were a band of friends always ready to support each other. And we were successful. Thanks to all the projects we had executed and the challenges we had faced and overcome, cadets have more opportunities to meet other cultures and learn new skills abroad, in Europe, and beyond.

International Military Leadership Academy Project

Once the project was completed and we were ready to disseminate the project results, the Military Academy of Land Forces started sharing best practices in Erasmus+ Program with other academies.

We visited the Hellenic Army Academy and Portuguese Military Academy – firstly to sign a bilateral agreement for Erasmus+ Program and to share the results of the Strategic Partnership Project. We also had the opportunity to frequently meet during various military forums and conferences, when the friendship among new partners started and a new idea for the project was born.

It was a time when we already had the International Semester introduced in a few military academies in Europe (fully or partially at least) and mobility windows for military students had been established.

The intensive course “Military Leadership” (still under the original name International PSO Course although with an updated program), developed during the first Strategic Partnership Project became more and more popular. We were receiving a lot of questions about the next edition. European academies were ready to send their students for that kind of training.

Then, during one conference or international meeting we commenced discussions with the Hellenic Army Academy and Portuguese Military Academy about

creating together a program of common activity. It was exactly the birth of the idea of the second Strategic Partnership Project fully dedicated to future officers' leadership competencies.

We were working several weeks under the project definition, under the activities that we would like to run for students, and under the outputs that we would like to develop.

Meetings dedicated to project structure were organized. We discussed in detail all project aspects, intellectual outputs, and main didactic activities in order to have a common understanding of the project framework. It was our lessons learned from the first Strategic Partnership project, that some topics if not defined in detail at the beginning, would cause some doubts and concerns later in the execution phase. Therefore, we focused our activities on securing a good and mutual understanding of the project goals among all Partners. From my personal point of view, it was crucial for future project success.

As early as during the project preparation we became friends. All partners were honest, open to discussion, and willing to jointly find a way for project execution despite the fact that we differed in terms of mobility culture, organization, and legal aspects. We paid special attention to transparency, communication, and timely delivered project outputs, asking questions when needed and securing the best quality of our common work.

Project „International Military Leadership Academy” was prepared in 2017 and executed by three partner Academies:

- Military Academy of Land Forces in Wroclaw (Poland) – as a leader of the Partnership;
- Hellenic Army Academy (Greece);
- Portuguese Military Academy (Portugal).

The project was submitted to the Polish National Agency of Erasmus+ Program. There were 72 applications in total, only 13 were granted, and only one was from a military higher education institution. This success was the result of carefully identified and learned lessons from previous initiatives. Additionally, which is important to stress in this place, is that all of our international projects were resulting from the work of a small group of the same people with some support from new

members. The commonly shared experience of these few people with fresh ideas from new dedicated enthusiasts were provisions of future success. Project execution was planned for two years. During that time, we wanted to develop the following intellectual outputs:

- Program of workshops dedicated to Military Leadership including four modules: Stress Management, Leadership in Communication, Crisis Management, and Leadership, Motivation and Influence;
- Two-week Intensive Program "Leadership in Practice", including assessment of student progress, evaluation of the program and delivery methods;
- Didactic materials: E-books, E-learning, and Interviews.

Above mentioned results were tested and evaluated during different mobility activities – in-person workshops for teachers and for students, as well as virtual and residential mobility, and intensive programs for teachers and students separately. Partner institutions agreed that the program of the International Military Leadership Academy will develop the following skills and competencies of future officers:

- Communication in command;
- Stress management;
- Motivating and influencing subordinates;
- Motivation and leadership in crisis situations.

Moreover, institutions agreed that each one will be responsible for developing the content of the workshop, and training aids (such as e-books and e-learning materials) according to the following arrangements:

- Portuguese Military Academy (Portugal) was responsible for developing the program of workshops dedicated to: "Leadership in Communication". The program consisted of 40 hours of lectures and exercises (practical classes) dedicated to students. Additionally, the Portuguese Military Academy organized workshops on "Leadership in Communication – best practices" dedicated to teachers and experts from all partner institutions;

- Hellenic Army Academy (Greece) was responsible for developing the program of workshops dedicated to: “Crisis Management”. The program consisted of 40 didactic hours of lectures and exercises (practical classes) dedicated to students. Additionally, Hellenic Army Academy organized workshops on “Crisis Management – best practices” dedicated to teachers/experts from all partner institutions;
- Military Academy of Land Forces (Poland) was responsible for developing two workshop programs dedicated to: “Leadership, Motivation and Influence” and “Stress Management”, as well as “Intensive Course – Leadership in Practice”. The program of each workshop consisted of 40 didactic hours of lectures and exercises (practical classes) dedicated to students. The program of the Intensive course consisted of 80 didactic hours, mostly practical. The academy organized workshops on “Leadership, Motivation and Influence” and “Stress Management” dedicated to teachers and experts from all partner institutions.

During the project execution, we were in touch all the time. We were looking for any opportunity to meet and organize project meetings – as many as possible. We knew that without good communication and common standards for all intellectual outputs, we will not be able to deliver project results on time and with high quality.

Very soon our friendship becomes closer and stronger. When we were finalizing the project I can easily state that we were family. Why? I think that the answer is simple. Since the very beginning of the project, there were people involved who were very devoted to the mobility idea. They believed that planned commonly developed competencies are very crucial for future officers (leaders) and are vital for their future success stories in their professional lives.

We did everything that was possible to support each other, and to understand our goals. I think that we had a mission, and that mission was completed. Even though the biggest challenge and the risk to the success of the project – the personal changes to the project team – we were able to finalize the project delivering all planned outcomes.

After these years of project completion, we are still in touch. We still remember and care for each other and we are keeping good memories from this project and trying to encourage others to do similar projects. Despite the various circumstances,

and obstacles that happened during the execution of the project we did what we had to do and we did it well.

Artur Zielichowski

The right framework: plan, content, developers, associates, and innovative elements

Abstract

Due to the increasing importance of international military cooperation, the education system of candidates for officers is facing many challenges. These challenges relate primarily to how to prepare them for action during peacekeeping missions and operations carried out during international cooperation within the UN, NATO, and the EU. One of these challenges will be how to teach skills needed to command and lead in an environment consisting of many nationalities and cultures. Commanders will have to use different styles of command because the style to which they are accustomed in their national armies is often not suited for a delicate, diverse international environment.

Each program and project is limited by two basic elements - financial resources and time. This applies in particular to public funds, and obtaining them from international institutions is an additional difficulty. Therefore, in the development of the program, and in particular the training schedule and cost optimization and maximization of participants (program beneficiaries), several options were considered in order to develop the most effective one. This chapter describes how to optimize the curriculum in order to make the best use of resources and time. It will also collect the participants' opinions from the personal perspective 3 years after its completion.

Presenting the opinions on the course from the perspective of a professional officer, commanding a platoon, will allow showing the long-term effects of training in the field of knowledge and skills.

The International Military Leadership Academy (IMLA) project is unique and therefore worth describing and keeping for the future in this book. The creativity of the team members, and the ability to find solutions in situations that are not found in relations between military universities, are great lessons in international cooperation. In this chapter, the author has described step by step how the IMLA project was created in terms of creating an appropriate methodology for solving the problem and setting the goal of the course. The success of the IMLA project can serve others in order to avoid "reinventing the wheel" by others.

Due to the increasing importance of international military cooperation, the education system of candidates for officers is facing many challenges. These challenges relate primarily to how to prepare them for action during operations carried out during international cooperation within the UN, NATO, and the EU. One of these challenges will be how to teach skills needed to command and lead in a cross-cultural environment. Commanders will have to use different styles of leadership that depend on each situation, the characteristics of subordinates, and the cultures of each country.

What is a project and how to start creating it?

Each program and project is limited by two basic elements - financial resources and time. This applies in particular to public funds, and obtaining them from international institutions is an additional difficulty. Therefore, in the development of the program, and in particular the training schedule and cost optimization and maximization of participants (program beneficiaries), several options were considered in order to develop the most effective one. This chapter describes how to optimize the curriculum in order to make the best use of resources and time. It will also collect the participants' opinions from the personal perspective 3 years after its completion.

The IMLA project is a response to the need arising among military universities in the field of international cooperation and the related issue of leadership. The solution we used was to change the problematic situation, i.e. bring a specific benefit. In order to plan this implementation well, we had to define the problem very well, i.e. we had to have knowledge about the reality that the project concerns. We have acquired this knowledge on the basis of our own experience, and observations, as well as a thorough analysis of available external data sources (e.g. official statistics). It was a task that was particularly difficult among military universities from Greece, Portugal, and Poland due to the lack of permanent and long-term cooperation between them and the related lack of knowledge. Based on these data, we determined what and how we want to change, that is, formulate goals and methods of action. The next step was to consider what results we expect and how we will evaluate them, whether we have actually achieved our planned goals. And finally - we need to assess what we need for this change, how much it will cost us and how much time we need to make the change.

To sum up before we started the project, we had to get answers to the following questions:

- Why do we want to implement the project in our Academy?
- What problem will we solve thanks to it?
- What kind of social change will we achieve for our cadets?
- What goals and results do we want to achieve?
- How will we measure these results of the IMLA project?
- Who should be involved in the project implementation?
- When will we implement it?
- How much - what are the costs associated with it?

The answers to the above questions can be found in the Program Of The International Military Leadership Academy.

The stages of creating a project

While creating the project, we completed the following key stages of the project:

- Problem diagnosis;
- Analysis of the environment;
- Main, detailed goal;
- Schedule of activities;
- Determination of the results, both "soft" (changes in attitudes, behaviors, knowledge that occurred as a result of the project activities) and "hard" (clearly defined, quantifiable effects, e.g. number of training hours, circulation of publications);
- budget, detailed cost estimate that will clearly define the budget that will be needed in the implementation of the project;
- resources needed to implement the project (personnel - the team implementing the project and personal - premises);
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Problem - It is necessary to define exactly what the problem is.

The starting point for creating a project is a good definition of the problem or need that we want to deal with. This is the most important part of any project - why do we need a project to solve a problem without specifying the problem. The diagnosis of the problem must clearly characterize its most important aspects, present the situation that we want to change, and show in a concise and clear manner, why we want to change it. It was diagnosed that despite the very good cooperation in the field of tactical exercises under NATO and common operational procedures, there is no unified system of training future commanders. Bearing in mind the assumptions of the system analysis, according to which the correct formulation of the problem should be "What is it and why is it the way it is? How should it be and what should be done to make it as it should be?" the following problem was formulated: What is the international leadership model and how to implement it in training.

A proven way to describe the problem is to present it in such a way that it is easy to justify (we avoid subjective statements), and that is easy to indicate what solutions and actions can be taken to remove the problem.

If we manage to prepare a good diagnosis, further work on the project will become a logical sequence of next steps that will be easy for us to plan. You need experience and knowledge to formulate a problem well, but they come with time, so don't give up if you don't get it right away. We do not define the problem through the lack of specific "solutions", such as the lack of training or the lack of an attractive offer of extracurricular activities. One of the detailed problems was to diagnose what elements in the field of teaching military leadership already exist in the national training programs, and what elements should be added to improve the functioning of future commanders in an international environment. The problem is the consequence of this lack, e.g. low level of knowledge, lack of interest in extracurricular activities, lack of intergenerational integration, etc. "Target group" - who are these people and why did we decide to solve their problem with the support of our project.

The model of the so-called "Elevator speech" or speeches in the elevator. Imagine that we have diagnosed a problem that we need a specific amount of money to solve, and we wonder where to get these funds. In the elevator, we meet a wealthy businessman who we hear of as a philanthropist and we have a unique chance to interest him in our case. The elevator takes about tens of seconds, so during this

time, we have to point out the most important issues in such a way that he appreciates the importance of the problem that we want to solve. The speech in the elevator must therefore be short and concise, and so must be the description of the problem.

The rich businessmen from the elevator were, in our case, the European Commission, and the persons responsible for preparing the speech (formatting and generating the message) were Anna Zamiar-Ziolkowska and Lieutenant Colonel Marcin Bielewicz.

Environment analysis

No project is suspended in a vacuum. The activities that we will implement within its framework will positively or negatively affect various people and institutions, just as they themselves will affect our project. We call them partners. Before starting the project, we conducted an analysis of the environment, i.e. we answered the question of what people and institutions will have an impact on our project and whether this impact will be positive or negative. The first variant that was considered was the participation of 5 countries (Figure 1) Portugal, France, Cyprus, Greece, and Poland. As a result of the talks and constellations, only three declared to participate in the project (Poland, Greece, and Portugal).

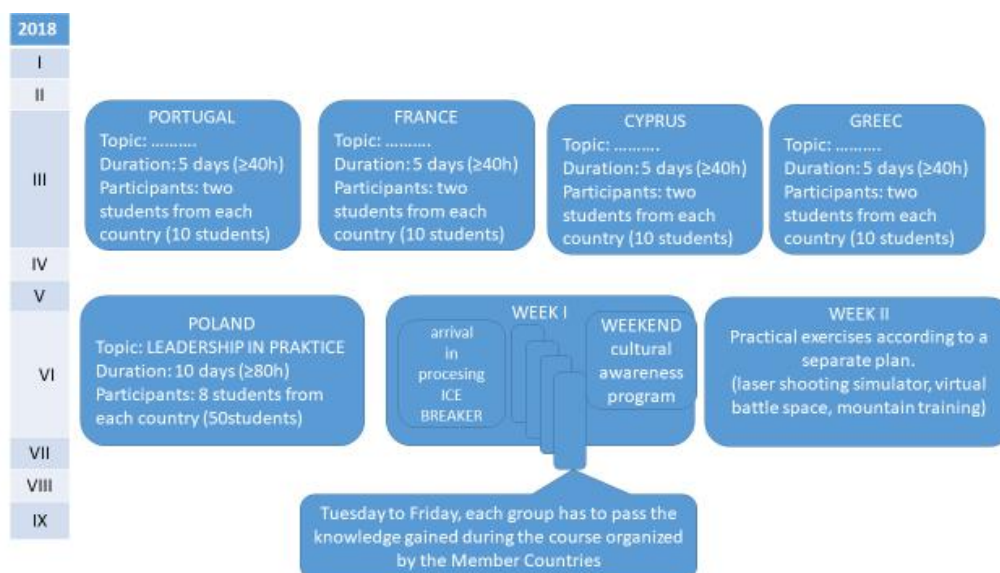


Figure 1: Test Phase Schedule Option-1.

Source: author's archive

Well-inclined project partners can help in changing the negative attitude of another person, or institution important for the project. The most important goal of the analysis of the environment was to define people as "important" for the project. The key institution was the European Commission and the most important "persons" commanders of military academies. Why commanders, each project is an additional activity, work, often going beyond the usually established scope of duties. Engaging resources and personnel in additional work at the expense of the already owned. Therefore, gaining the favor of commanders was as important as the correct preparation of the application for raising funds. Thanks to the favor of the commanders, the members of the project could change their priorities and spend the time obtained in this way on work on the project.

The selection of cadets to participate in the course was also very important due to the additional burden they will be burdened with. Therefore, during the selection of cadets to participate in the program, their qualifications and skills were specified in detail. Participation in the program was completely voluntary. Cadets deciding to participate in the program were not exempt from the teaching rigors that apply to them in the Academic year. As for organizers (teachers), the program was an additional activity that required good time management in order to fulfill all obligations. Participation in the program required participation in classes organized in partner academies. This additional occupation generated backlogs in the implementation of the training program at our own universities. Therefore, one of the rigors of selection for the program was achieving high academic results.

The implementation of complex projects often requires knowledge from various fields of science and various areas of a given enterprise, therefore the competencies of team members should be interdisciplinary in these cases. External experts are also often appointed.

Participants of the project team should be predisposed to teamwork. The project team is based on the assumption that cooperation always brings better and faster results than individual action because it allows for such an important synergy effect, which translates into better final results for the project.

A correctly formulated project team should meet the principles, including:

- High standard of requirements for team members;

- Staff prepared immediately to perform the task due to the rigid time frame of the project;
- Teamwork orientation;
- Complementarity of skills and specializations.

In order to create a team of selected specialists, dedicated meetings were held to form the team. The team performs better if it goes through all of the 3 phases of assembly: Formation stage, Enrichment stage, and Sustainment stage⁹). When creating a team, you need to be aware that it is necessary to bring and rework all stages before it goes to implementation. Therefore, the meeting of teachers involved in the project was not limited only to formal but also informal events in order to gain confidence and learn about the work styles of the IMLA project partners.

Defining the goals of the project

Having a defined problem, we actually achieved a defined goal. The goal answered the question: what will change after the planned activities are completed? What will be the change in the target group of the project? . The goal, like the project, must be clearly and unambiguously formulated so that it leaves no room for different interpretations and that everyone understands it similarly. A very useful principle when formulating goals is the SMART principle that the author used while working on the project¹⁰:

- Simple - to convey a clear and clear message;
- Measurable - to be able to numerically express its implementation, to measure whether we managed to implement our plans;
- Attractive - in order to arouse interest and willingness to act, a boring goal will not be motivating;
- Realistic - to be achievable, it would be within our capabilities;
- Timely - to be defined in time - failure to define the time of reaching the goal demotivates and takes away the willingness to act. If you do not know when we are to achieve the goal, the chance that we will never

⁹ ATP 6-22.6 *Army Team Building*, Department of the Army Washington, DC, 30 October 2015, Tuckman B.: *Developmental sequence in small groups*. Psychological Bulletin. 1965, 63 (6). pp. 384–399.

¹⁰ E. Somerska, *Metoda SMART: Czyli jak przekuć swoje marzenia w rzeczywistość?*, Warsaw, August 9, 2020

achieve it is very high because there will always be something more important that will take time for design work.

In projects, it is often necessary to define the main (superior) goal and specific (immediate) goals. The main goal determines the qualitative change that will occur as a result of the implementation of the project in a given area on a local/regional/national /international scale (The International Leadership Academy project is a perfect complement to the study program, emphasizing practical methods of acquiring and improving interpersonal skills in international conditions), and the specific objectives follow directly from our project and will be the result of actions taken, (Promoting belonging to the EU security system by developing European citizenship and identifying with EU values; strengthening active participation and shared responsibility for the EU security system.). Detailed goals should be formulated as specifically as possible - then it will be easy for us to "translate" them into results.

The results

Results are the effects of the activities undertaken in the project, in other words - everything that the participants will gain or will receive as a result of the project activities. By planning the results, we have to consider what new skills, knowledge, and experiences will be gained by people participating in the project (these will be the so-called soft results) and what will be specific, material effects of the project (the so-called hard results). Soft results are more difficult to define, for example, an evaluation questionnaire, which participants will fill in after the end of the training and assess the increase in their knowledge, motivation or skills, may be helpful.

Hard results are easy to measure - it will be for example training 50 people, conducting 100 hours of workshops, and organizing 2 conferences. Sometimes the hard results also include all material effects of the project - published publications, training materials, teaching aids, guides, etc., they are also often called project outputs.

Activities

Having a defined problem, goals, and results, we can consider what actions will lead us to solve the problem, i.e. achieving the goal. The most frequently used activities in social projects are:

- Training, lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences;
- Internships, trips, study visits;
- Promotional campaigns;
- Publishing houses, publications, research, strategies;
- Consultation.

The planned activities are to result in the achievement of the intended goal. When planning the implementation of a project, it should be remembered that it consists of all the activities we undertake in it, e.g. if we organize a study visit of several days, we must take into account all the preparatory activities related to the organization of the visit (e.g. providing transport, accommodation, insurance, meals, planning program, etc.). Activities must also take into account the specifics of the group. Therefore, a detailed testing phase was carried out in order to test and verify the tools, organization, and training venues. Teaching tools and training methods were tested and critically assessed during the workshops for teachers/trainers. After consideration and joint discussion, better training solutions such as logistics solutions were developed before entering the training of the target group in our case, cadets. Figure 2.

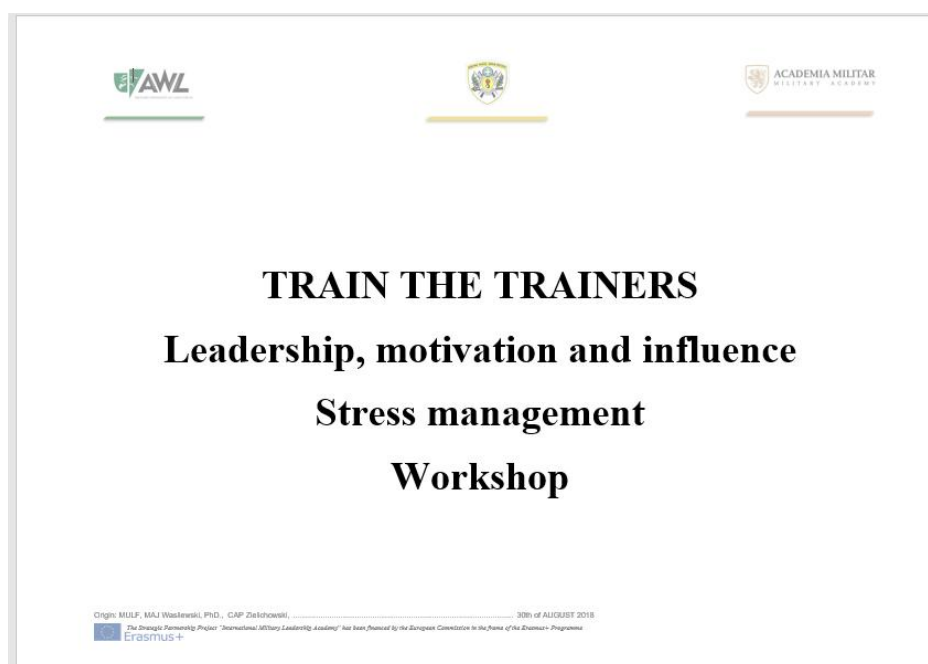


Figure 2: Title page of one of the four plans designed for future trainers

Source: author's archive

Each of the 4 workshops had its own test phase which allowed him to improve and achieve better efficiency in education (Figure 3). The next step is to determine the duration of the project (it will result from the planned activities), and then arrange all activities during the project in a logical order, i.e. prepare the so-called schedule of activities and set a deadline for the performance of individual activities. The problem that the design group faced was not only the optimization of costs but also the time they had to implement the course. Each day of participation in the training resulted in arrears in participation in the program classes. This was especially important due to the specialized training that our cadets have to undergo in order to prepare themselves to be platoon commanders. As I have already marked, the course was an additional activity. Absence from combat training with the use of combat vehicles and live ammunition could be difficult to make up for and, as a consequence, the organization of additional classes for only a few cadets. Such additional training is often not accredited due to its time-consuming nature. Therefore, the solutions we adopted regarding the mobility phase between universities were optimal, minimizing the time of absence and maximizing the number of beneficiaries of the project. 48 cadets from three universities took part in the project (Pic. 1).



Picture 1: Photo of the course participants

Source: author's archive

Budget

The budget must result from the activities provided for in the schedule, it cannot include the costs of activities that have not been planned. In the case of the IMLA project, this concerned in particular (means of transport, horse rental, etc.) All costs included in the budget must be realistic, i.e. correspond to real market rates. We do not provide imaginary prices, but we estimate either based on our own experience, or we collect offers from several companies offering the service we are interested in and choose the one that offers the highest quality at the lowest price.

Very often, funders do not finance all project costs, indicating the catalog of the so-called eligible and non-eligible costs. Ineligible costs are those that will not be financed by the donor. In some grant competitions, the costs, e.g. office rent, coordination, bank charges, etc. are not eligible. etc. Usually, as part of the project, we are not able to purchase means of transport, exchange rate differences, or cover costs not related to the project being implemented, but incurred before and after the project implementation date. The implementation of the budget was an element that required knowledge of not only national but also international regulations. In public institutions such as Military Academies, budget planning takes place at least annually. Such a situation means that the appearance of unforeseen costs (e.g. a delayed plane and the related end of a prolonged stay in a hotel) may result in additional unexpected work and looking for solutions.

Resources needed to complete the project.

When we have a defined problem, goals, results, and activities, we have to consider what resources we can use to achieve them. Do we have enough people on the project team to allow us to implement the project from start to finish? Do we have the appropriate housing base? (project office, training room, computer?). Do we have funds to cover the contribution of our own project? (if the donor foresees the necessity to make a financial contribution). One of the resources in the implementation is volunteers - in the case of military academies, this was not a problem due to the nature of the military service of the course participants. Performing a thorough analysis of the organization's resources will help us properly

plan the budget (e.g. we know that we have to provide funds for renting a project office in the cost estimate because we do not have one ourselves) and avoid unnecessary problems during its implementation.

The costs related to the mobility of cadets and teachers were a very heavy burden on the budget. None of the partners' countries had a direct border, which made road transport unprofitable due to time. Therefore, great attention was paid to limiting travel to a minimum. As a result of many hours of simulations of solutions related to travel, a final variant was developed in which each cadet traveled only twice (once to the partner's Academy, and to Poland, where the last classes were held).

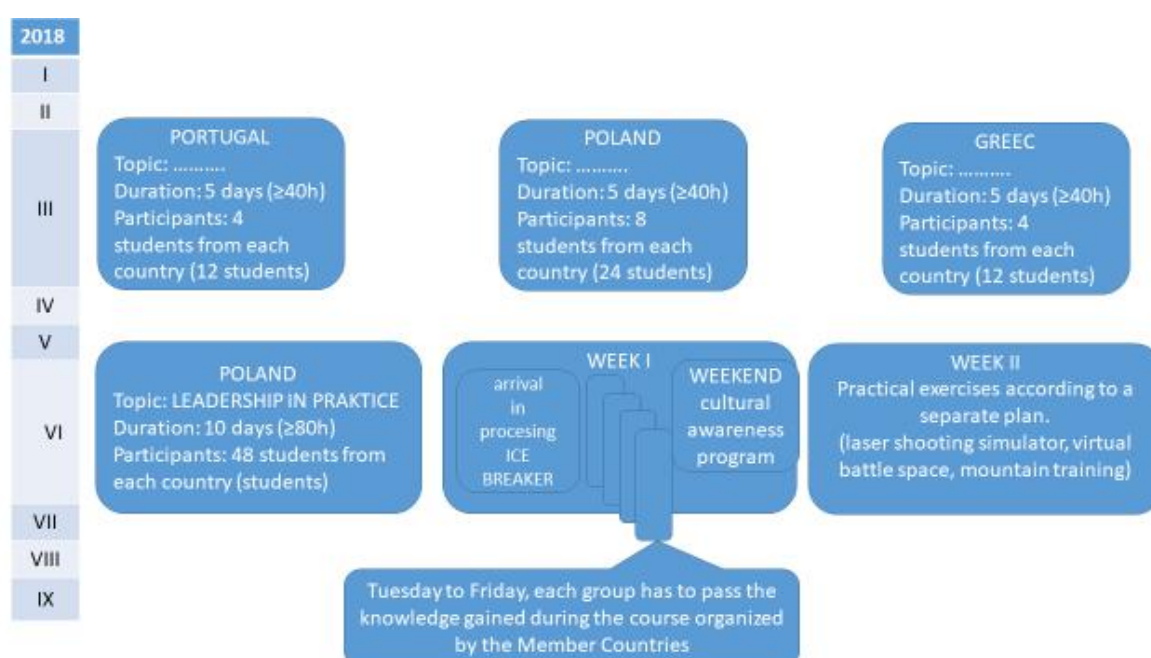


Figure 3. Test Phase Final option.

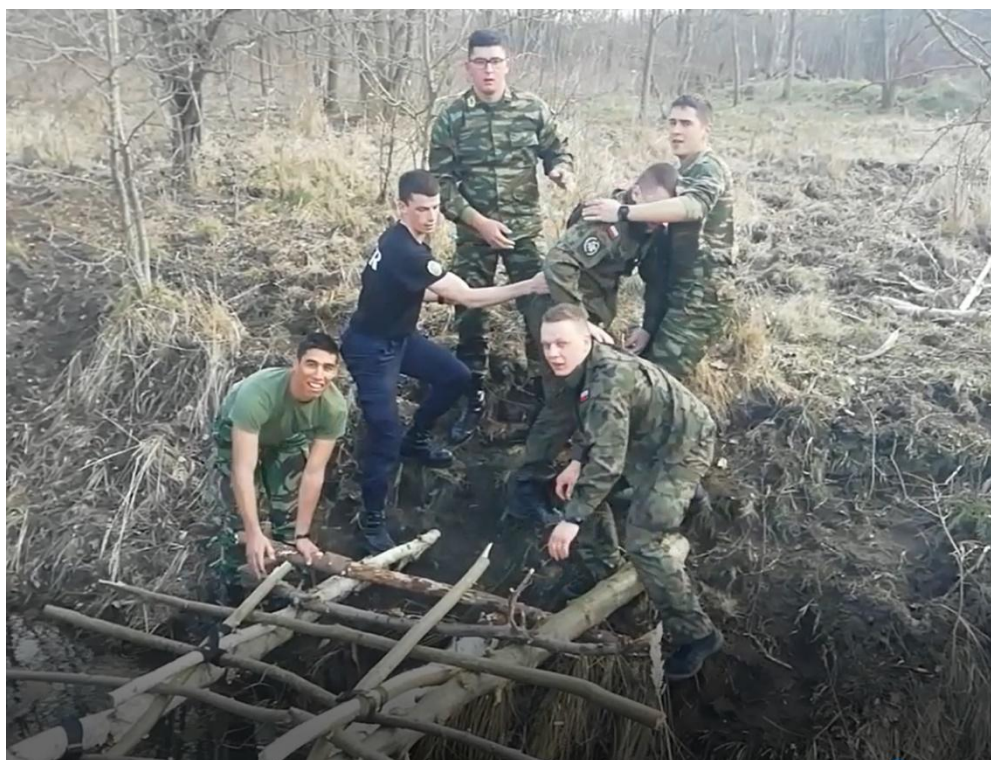
Source: author's own

Was it worth creating and implementing IMLA projects?

As we can see from the above description, creating a good project and implementing it successfully (success = achieving the planned goal) is not easy. Is it worth taking the risk of preparing the project, obtaining funds, ensuring our own contribution, and the hardship of its implementation, if the goals that we have planned may not be achieved 100%? Certainly, working in the design system is a big and difficult challenge, it requires courage, resistance to stress, organizational and leadership skills, and teamwork skills. However, creating a project from start to finish

and its subsequent implementation is a unique opportunity to pursue your own interests and passions, and observing the changes that take place from the moment your own ideas are transformed into real activities gives great joy and satisfaction. This was the case during the work on the IMLA project and during its implementation.

The effects of the project will be visible only in a few years when cadets will occupy high command positions. It can be said with a high degree of certainty that their attitude towards other names has changed and will allow them to work more effectively in an international environment. If as cadets they dealt with the most difficult tasks in the national group during the course, as the inexperience of a commander, why should it be different in adulthood?



Picture 2: Photo of the cadets building makeshift bridges

Source: author's archive

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Marcin Bielewicz

Strategic management of the project

Abstract

An interesting and innovative topic that creates opportunities and assists an organizational change needs good management and leadership. Although these two approaches sometimes collide during everyday operations and project realization, it is important to employ both for the success of the project. The chapter describes tools and solutions used by the project team, as well as experience from previous international projects and programs used to avoid most issues and traps during the execution of the International Military Leadership Academy Strategic Partnership Project. The author discusses the reality of day-to-day project management activities relating them to the best practices established by the commonly used project and program management standards. He debates the project team approach to project preparation, execution, and closing phases, as well as communication, information, quality assurance, risk management, leadership, and stakeholder engagement strategies, plans, and registers. He highlights the important factors of scope and target group that influenced the project, such as the international character of the Partnership and the higher military education system.

Additionally, from a time perspective, he shares his and his team members' views on how some parts of the project realization could be done differently to make its realization less cumbersome, which could be useful for future managers planning and executing their projects and programs in a highly demanding and restrictive environment.

Preparation of the project, especially choosing the right partners, activities, tools, and so on, requires cautious and informed work. You may use every possibility to meet and discuss these topics with potential partners. There are conferences and symposiums like the International Military Academic Forum or other opportunities such as Erasmus monitoring or exchange visits. That was the case for our all international projects. You may start like us, selecting among those you already know from smaller engagements. Maybe you or your colleagues collaborated with international conferences, research projects, or publications? Maybe you have interacted or worked with some of them? It does not matter. What matters, and it mattered for us, is the previous experience from these encounters.

Face-to-face meetings, where you can sit and discuss freely are priceless. One should keep in mind that the project preparation phase usually has no budget and would require a potential project-leading organization an initial investment. A problem here is that public institutions, and military organizations, even more, are restricted from independent investments. It needs specific planning and senior leadership conviction on the redirection of precious resources. Especially, given that at this phase there are no guarantees on granting the project or earning benefits. Therefore, it is useful to use whatever opportunities occur to the team.

The future project-leading institution or the project idea proponent should not limit potential partnerships to its known contacts. There is also a tendency to look at your near neighborhood in selecting partners, because of distance or similarities in operation. Sometimes such an approach proves right, but rather for regional endeavors. If you think about the strategic partnership in which outputs may apply to a larger audience, like the entire EU or more, you should look for diversity.

This approach was the result of our experience in four challenging international projects. The first three were big themselves and were pushing us outside of our comfort zone, therefore we decided, somewhat subconsciously, to work with known partners. Although it is almost impossible to analyze the alternatives to our choice of partners, it is safe to say that it would not be much more difficult if we reach outside of known institutions. There are more relevant factors when you choose partners that are discussed throughout this chapter.

With our fourth international project – International Military Leadership Academy (IMLA), we have decided to work with new partners having in mind potential beneficiaries of the project's outputs. Using the Erasmus+ Programme's various opportunities available for staff and faculty, our team members met with potential partners. Following previous projects' experience, we learned to limit the number of partners to five to manage a project efficiently. For various reasons, we ended up with three institutions from Poland as a leader, and Greece and Portugal as strategic partners, to form a new strategic partnership for project application and execution. The new partnership presented both geographic and cultural diversity which was considered a major factor for future implementation of the results. Looking at the map and drawing the lines connecting partner institutions' locations, one can

see that the Partnership covers most of the EU, hence the outcomes of its cooperation are universal and applicable to any country, culture, or structure.

Sometimes best friends and long-term partners that you collaborated/cooperated with are not fit, suited, or simply eligible for certain projects and programs. What I would recommend is a very detailed analysis and frank discussion with potential partners. The will, although probably the most important, is not always enough. Sometimes your partner is not an academic institution or is not independent in international relations and financial decision-making, therefore will create additional bureaucracy layers that the partnership would need to consider during preparations and fight throughout the project realization.

Such situations occurred during our projects, where our partners needed to confirm or even ask for permission to act on the project, especially financially. Sometimes, and that is the case of some basic officer education institutions in the EU, they are dependent on civilian universities for the academic part of the education and their respective MODs or service commands.

Thus, before making final decisions, the leading institution needs, together with its potential partners, to analyze all aspects of the future project concerning required commitments. Such aspects are but are not limited to, an ability to spend money allocated by project activities and according to the sponsoring/co-financing institution (e.g. Erasmus+ Programme, International Visegrad Fund, etc.), in-kind and financial contributions to the project, and involvement of participating institution's cadre, faculty, and students where applicable.

According to most project or program management methodologies, a project manager (PM) is selected and nominated by an organization's top leadership. In our case the project manager (a.k.a. project coordinator) was the person that was behind the project's proposal, therefore, it would be safe to say, she was a natural choice (the same PM for our three out of four international projects). It is important to mention that all of our international projects were bottom-up initiatives and had built their successes on their predecessors. It was both convenient and practical to have the project leader being familiar with the deep background and details of the initiative, as it was a part and a continuity of big idea realization with relatively smaller, iterative, steps.

The core project management team should at least consist of Project Leader (or Project Coordinator), a Financial Specialist, and a Senior Matter Expert. You might find it useful to have additional functions in your team, like an Administrative Assistant and a Communication Assistant. Depending on the scale of the project you are about to run, the size of the organization and the project partnership, as well as available resources you will decide on the composition of the project team. You should also keep in mind that organizations are structured to “fit for purpose” and projects require their personnel to do more than their job descriptions specify. It is even more significant in highly structured institutions like military academies. On one hand, it seems easier to form ad hoc project teams, because it requires only the commander’s direct order, but on the other hand, the same commander might be concerned with internal reassignments impacting his or her unit baseline activity’s expected outputs. Hence, my suggestion is to secure these temporary roles in the institution’s official documentation (e.g. staff order, commander’s daily order, etc), aside from a formal nomination of the project team members in the project contract/agreement with the sponsoring/co-financing institution. It might become important in times of difficulties with project realization because military institutions tend to value more their internal regulations than external contracts, especially when civilian entities are involved.

Whatever the decision on the project leader/coordinator’s selection would be, it is important to take into consideration that such a person should have specific skills and experience in project management. For Erasmus+ Programme (like its predecessor LLP), very useful is knowledge and experience in running structured projects where methodologies such as PRINCE2 are widely used. Luckily, we had such a person, and actually, she was behind the project proposals. Choosing the right person to lead the project, the organization should pay attention to the candidate’s position in the structure and relation he or she has within the organization and with partners outside. It becomes even more important in the military and academic worlds where status, titles, and ranks play crucial roles, and people are quite sensitive about that. You want to have an influencer well established in the organization, but also a dynamic, innovative, and highly motivated person, which might be very difficult to find, because, on one hand, you are looking for a seasoned and usually mid-age or older person, on the other a young and dynamic one. Hence,

it is recommended to build the project team in a way to incorporate persons with the above-mentioned qualities. In our case, we had a project leader to manage the administrative part of the project, and a senior subject matter expert to supervise the development of the project content and serve as the liaison with the operational part of the organization (business as usual). Although it was not possible to delineate the boundaries of their responsibility, they formed the team in a way that the project could only benefit from it. They had supplemented their work and acted as each other's deputies when one was absent or engaged in their regular day-to-day duties.

In our case, where we had led four international, practically subsequent projects, it was beneficial and helped us to complete all activities that the projects required without major issues, even in extreme situations such as when during our last project (IMLA), we lost our long time project leader who inspired and led these endeavors. The close work of our Project Leader – civilian, and the Senior Subject Matter Expert – military academic, albeit sometimes overlapping and redundant, allowed those two core roles to understand the project's processes and its environment, as well as support each other. Additionally, considering the quite challenging military and highly hierarchical environment of the project, this civil-military cooperation brought even more benefits to the project. Our international project execution experience, encompassing various endeavors from 2012-2019, has taught us that the composition of the core project team is the key factor to success.

As mentioned before additional functions also play an essential role in the project. Having a separate Financial Assistant/Officer, as well as Communication and Administrative Assistants will allow the project a steady and uninterrupted execution. It helps the Project Leader and the Senior Subject Matter Expert to focus on the aims of the project without dividing their attention between administrative time- and energy-consuming activities. Important activities for the project's organization, such as proper accounting, reporting, and communication can be carried out by dedicated specialists who do not necessarily have to be involved in the project's main events and development of its outputs.

A Financial Assistant/Officer should be part of each of the institutions' teams involved in the project. That means financial day-to-day coordination can be performed between them and their respective financial departments, engaging a Project Leader only when his or her intervention is required. This role becomes even

more crucial for a project when the partnership consists of institutions in which the EURO is not an official currency, therefore, requiring currency conversion whenever the project pays for planned activities. Additionally, a person executing the financial side of the project must pay attention to the existing financial regulation of a project institution, the country where it is located and a financing/sponsoring institution (in most of our cases it was the National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme). There might be various rules, as well as spending and fiscal levels existing in all of those areas, which a Financial Assistant/Officer must observe when executing a project budget and advising a Project Leader on proper mitigation measures where necessary. Fluctuating exchange rates make his/her work even more difficult. Moreover, the Financial Assistant/Officer plays a decisive role in a mid-project progress report (e.g. interim progress report) and a final report, preparing financial statements for both.

An Administrative Assistant is important in dealing with day-to-day project management. You would find them extremely helpful if you can have those functions in your project team. You may expect an increased volume of electronic and traditional (paper) correspondence, routine and on-demand reports, point papers, and statements, as well as more formal documents, contracts, developers' timesheets, etc. Those need both attention and scrutiny, which is time-consuming, sensitive in nature, and diverts your attention from strategic planning and overall supervision of the project. Moreover, there will be programs of multiplier events, transnational project meetings, and activities to be prepared; meeting minutes recorded, and documents archived. Moreover, when ready to prepare progress and final reports, you would need someone that can help you in finding the right documents, and preparing lists, tables, and statements to be signed by the legal representative and attached to these reports. You would then be looking for a well-organized person with a legal and administration background.

You would also find a Communication Assistant quite handy. The person can help you with maintaining the project website, social media profiles, graphics, pictures, handouts, and more, you name it. You need to conduct internal and external information campaigns to paint a positive picture and secure support for the project and its activities. A great idea and a good management plan are key aspects for the successful realization of the project. However, it should be delivered to a broad

audience nicely wrapped in eye-catching form supported by attractive rhetoric. That means that you are looking for a person with a specific skill set. Preferably somebody experienced with media, design, marketing, and public relations.

The last group you would like to select is developers of intellectual outputs. The Strategic Partnership Programs, as well as other similar regional or international programs, allow contracting developers and support staff from participating (partner and affiliated) institutions and from outside. The specific arrangements and regulations governing the financial, administrative, and legal side of such relations are specified by the rules of each program and project.

Your approach might be influenced by certain considerations like lack of available experts within your and partner institutions, the will to enrich the project outputs, or cooperation with so-called affiliated partners. Depending on the particular co-financing organization's rules you may encounter various restrictions as to what you can pay for or which expenses of the developers you may cover from your project's budget. Learning those specific rules and restrictions, as well as using others' experience, would help any project team to avoid problems with executing the project's activities. A fine example of experience-sharing sessions is those organized by the National Agency of Erasmus+ Programme (NA). Our team was invited to such sessions to tell their story, where NA specialists responsible for specific fields were helping with providing possible solutions to challenges and issues, we or other project teams had encountered.

During your selection process of developers, you would probably like to reach out, as we did, first to those whom you have already worked with, even if it was outside of international initiatives. Despite good memories and experiences from those previous interactions, it is necessary to check their skill-sets and availability. You need to be sure they can communicate in English (if that is the primary language of your project) if they are available when required by the project activities, whether they are dependable and honest, and if they have the required level of knowledge, skills, and competencies required by the scope of a project. You do not want to end up with a person that lacks one of the above-mentioned items, because it might create unnecessary delays, additional workload, stress, and conflicts in the team.

Understanding the nature of any project with an embedded certain scale of its unpredictability requires every project team to eliminate as soon and as many as

possible identified obstacles. Regarding the risks they cannot eliminate, they should take actions to minimize their impact by creating mitigation measures and contingency plans way ahead of the start of the project execution phase. It would help the team to react easier and faster to occurring threats or opportunities, and dedicate more effort to deal with those they were not able to predict.

In many instances, and our example is the confirmation, project teams are formed within the organization out of its regular employees. That means that the project team members, despite their project functions, have to fulfill their primary tasks originating from their job descriptions, and are being evaluated by their immediate supervisors/commanders based on their performance in business-as-usual functions. That is why it is important to embed specific additional project tasks of project team members in official documents, such as the commander's daily orders or annexes to civilian employee contracts. This way, the organization both delegates responsibilities and authority, as well as protects project team members against possible negative impacts on their regular duties resulting from their devotion to project execution.

Considering the above factors and the multiple necessary activities that each project needs, the future project leader/coordinator might like to assemble various specialists/experts with different skills to form the project team. However, he/she needs to think about the right balance between the expected workload connected with the project and a manageable team. Many studies are proving that smaller teams are more efficient and communication within such groups is faster and easier. Hence, a small and vibrant team of enthusiasts with the right skill set would work better than a large group of specialists. Moreover, you might think about combining certain team roles, which is possible and sometimes advisable, however, it needs deep analysis to avoid overburdening your team. Therefore, based on our experience we would recommend against such practices (although we were forced to do it in some cases). Our experience also shows that despite your efforts there would be times you would need to temporarily combine some functions (e.g. sick leaves, holidays, temporary duties, etc.). In summary, the teams' key roles should be defined and assigned. This will ensure your control over a project and allow you to quickly react to occurrences you have not predicted.

Having the initial arrangements and considerations, as well as a viable business case presented to the leadership for their permission to project proposal/application submission, you might start composing your formal application. The format might vary between co-financing institutions. Sometimes it is only in electronic form and sometimes it needs to be on paper, but they always require pretty much the same elementary information from the project leader (leading organization). It includes the project title, justification, alignment with the institution's strategy, information on leading and partner institutions, the project's plan and budget, its aims, target groups, and points of contact.

It is good practice to construct some support documentation concurrently with drafting the project application. This way you might catch many of the details while progressing with the application. Especially, because usually the application forms are structured in a way in which you first start with generalities and then work on the details. Regardless of your approach to application preparation and the selected method you would like to follow during the project's execution, you might find several tools and examples we have developed during our international endeavors useful. Some were obvious directions from project management methodologies, and some resulted from our experience. We have learned that if you do a project as your additional job, you do not have time for all documentation prescribed by well-established PM structures such as PRINCE2 or similar. However, as stated earlier, formal education and experience help you choose and prioritize what is necessary and possible for your project.

An illustrative example of the above-mentioned is the Gantt Chart, which is sometimes required to accompany the application and gives you the overall view and perspective on the project. It also helps to identify gaps and interdependencies between activities, as well as assists you with resource planning. Various tools can assist you in collating the diagram with all planned activities (e.g. MS Project). They are not expensive and most likely you might find out that your institution (military academy/university) already owns several licenses and teaches your students how to use them. Do not work in a silo and assume the worst when you lack a particular piece of knowledge. You or your team members have friends in other departments, and for this, you would like to direct your first steps to IT support or the front desk. I will always encourage future project teams to learn about your parent organization

and what assets it controls because you will not have enough resources in your project budget to buy or rent everything you would need to deliver your project's outcomes.

Every application consists of a proposed budget for its execution. Therefore, it is necessary to work with potential partners, as well as with your financial department to know what is allowed, acceptable, and possible to be financed with external support. In programs like Erasmus+ Programme Strategic Partnership, you will find items and action categories that might be covered entirely by the project budget and these co-financed e.g. (25/75 rule). In case you decide to include the latter, you need to inform your Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and secure these funds before the project execution commences. You should also think ahead about indirect and administrative expenses (e.g. exchange fees, transfer fees, remuneration for your admin staff work, etc.). Some grant programs include an operational part of the allocated budget for the project, but read the regulations and rules carefully or ask the grant personnel about what you can buy or pay for with these funds, even when it may be a so-called lump sum – meaning you do not need to detail it in the project budget. Other financial arrangements include specific rules and timelines of payments and reimbursements to your institution's personnel involved in the project (i.e. project team, developers, support/technical staff), your project partners, and associate partners' personnel. It is important to decide which part of the project outputs needs to be contracted because it usually involves other departments (e.g. Contracting, Audit, Legal) and it takes an additional amount of time even for simple tender procedures.

You might want to prepare various contracts, time sheets, and financial report templates. Sometimes, so it was in our case, that those needed to be bilingual, which means you are obliged to have them approved by the legal and financial departments, or/and foreign languages department, or/and sworn translator. We wrote and translated such documents within our project team and used the existing contract for proofreading, however, you have to check what is available in your institution before such service is required. Our experience from previous international projects taught us that a lack of agreed templates creates challenges and inconsistency in actual documentation submitted by developers and partners, which can give you a

headache preparing interim and final reports, and most likely would end up with additional audits from the co-financing organization.

You should also prepare and inform, or sometimes reach an agreement with your partners in the form and frequency of reporting. We have included those arrangements in formal agreements with partners and established a so-called Quarterly Financial Report to track expenditures, manage risks and capture possible inconsistencies. It helped a lot in fixing small discrepancies long before they became issues in need of external action. Those problems resulted mainly from language and local (national or internal) accounting systems differences. That is why it is necessary to discuss and clear the procedures, as well as keep the same team members throughout the project duration. Also, it is another good reason to have a full-time financial specialist on your team, best if that person has financial and legal formal education and experience.

An experienced team knows that they need to create a thoroughly detailed and complete plan of project activities and engagements. They also know that the only sure thing about the plan is that it will change due to the changing environment in which the project will exist. For that purpose, the team needs to prepare a risk management plan. They should brainstorm, analyze, and wargame possible scenarios. They can use external experts and help to predict possible threats and opportunities that might affect the proper execution of the project. All these actions are needed to properly plan the project actions, de-conflict activities, and prepare contingency plans in case those risks occur.

The problem we have encountered resulted from the occurrence of the risk we probably did not want to talk about or accept might happen – namely losing the project leader. It caused some disturbance even though it happened in the final stage of the project execution. The impact of this loss was limited by our preparations for another risk situation – an overwhelmed key personnel. Therefore, based on our previous experiences we have teamed the project leader with a senior subject matter expert, so they could assist each other on daily bases and take over one's tasks and responsibilities in case of his/her unavailability. Although not planned as a permanent solution it assured the continuity of the project and its successful completion.

This was an example of a lesson learned implemented by the project team that helped to reduce the effect of a significant crisis. Therefore, it is important to

develop a habit/rule to run the lessons observed/identified/learned process after each project and be consistent with them to improve other initiatives and not make the same mistakes. Contingency planning, redundancy, and teamwork are great assets in overcoming difficulties and helping to manage the risks throughout the process.

Two additional areas the team should focus their attention on during all phases of the project are; a communication strategy and quality assurance arrangements. The former plays a crucial role in information campaigns and stakeholder engagement. As mentioned above, a project may have various stakeholders, target groups, beneficiaries, and even opponents, which if not properly identified and addressed can negatively affect the project and its team. Properly tailored messages for respective audiences can multiply the effect, promote change, or in many cases help with careers. The team needs to analyze and create consistent and digestible messages for each group because conveying the universal (the same) message to all might bring adverse effects. It is a difficult task and requires not only managerial and leadership skills but also experience and the ownership of professional and private relations and channels.

The latter area, quality assurance, helps you to control output developments and their alignment with the project's aims and assumptions. The project team must carefully consider and collect key aspects and requirements of various quality systems because the international project's product is designed to be used by various actors. In our case, drawing experience from previous projects, we reviewed our academy's internal quality assurance systems and those of the Implementation Group of the European Union. Moreover, aiming at future potential users from the European Military Basic Officers Education Institutions (military academies and universities), we wanted our IMLA programs to be recognized by that international body. Following the rules and guidelines established by the IG for Common Modules, we have added a layer of scrutiny and quality assurance. Validation of those programs gave the IMLA Project more publicity and needed advertisement. Additionally, the experience from previous projects led the project team to prepare templates and clear guidance for all planned products: module descriptions (course programs), e-books, e-learning courses, and interviews. It consisted of directions and guidance for authors and developers describing text structure and style; the e-learning content format; the type of e-learning platform hosting developed courses;

the types of multimedia allowed, and the minimum and maximum of e-book or e-learning pages. It helped the preparation for the test phase, future results' dissemination, and implementation in other institutions outside of the partnership. On top of all of those actions, the project team had allocated funds for internal peer reviews conducted by scholars and language support for proofreading all developed materials.

To check the readability and applicability of developed intellectual outputs (programs, books, online courses, and other texts), as well as the performance of participants, the team prepared a book of evaluations. It consisted of universal templates of traditional (paper forms) and modern (online questionnaires) tools to measure, evaluate, and assess. The forms were used by event participants, teachers/instructors, and cadets of the test group. The teacher/instructor group also used additional forms while acting as non-participating observers during various events of the project test phase to evaluate cadets' leadership skills and competencies. The cadet group expressed their views on the course content and developed materials (live and online), as well as instructors' performance. They also evaluated each other using "peer evaluation" forms.

The team also included event evaluations for their internal improvement and quality assurance purposes. The participants of the planned and organized multiplier events and transnational project meetings were asked about their opinion on the organizational sides and content. Those questionnaires' results gave us external feedback not only regarding a particular event but the project itself. It showed the team their communication campaign results and provided food for thought on how to improve such events' attractiveness and which techniques and channels they should use to strengthen the signal outside of the partnership.

Our project application was submitted to the National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme for review and grant award. It is a natural process since any funding institution receives many applications replying to their calls for proposals. The agency (or other similar institution) checks and evaluates the proposal presented in the application (similarly to a business case proposal to enterprise leadership in the industry), especially in terms of the rules and purpose of such initiatives. It also undergoes the so-called "sanity checks" of the proposed budget, to avoid unnecessary and exaggerated costs. Therefore, to create the application, and its

justification, in particular, the team needs to be precise and bold in providing enough information explaining the goals and the expected benefits, which, because of limited space per application section, requires much more than simply enthusiasm.

The positive result of this evaluation allowed us to start the execution of this project albeit with a smaller budget than applied for. Therefore, before starting any activity prescribed by the project, the team had to review and adjust the project's plan to accommodate those slight budget changes. Additional work was needed to adjust the already drafted financial documents and contracts between partners.

From the project management point of view, the project's preparation phase is crucial for its execution and successful conclusion. It is the phase where well-prepared documentation, analyzed risks and detailed planning may lead the team to believe they should not encounter anything that might disrupt the process. However, any such assumptions should be approached with caution, because there are too many moving parts in the project and its environment that the team does not control. Hence, good planning allows the team to focus on and devote their extra energy to those unexpected or unforeseen occurrences.

The transnational project meetings are the main opportunities for partners to coordinate main activities, make and accept adjustments to rules and timelines, discuss face-to-face, and strengthen the bond between team members. Of course, you may, like us, use every possible way and event to meet with your partners. We had planned one transnational project meeting more or less every four months (twice per partner), but also used conferences (like IMAF) and IG sessions for project purposes. That way, we were able to meet more frequently than prescribed by the project using other funding sources, even though sometimes we met in a reduced group (at least one member per partner). Each time we had to decide who should take part in these meetings additionally, especially in the light of the limited financial support provided by the project for such a purpose. Depending on the specific and predominant topic of the meeting, you would like to have not only the core team but sometimes one or more developers, the financial assistant, or the matter expert. Their support and expertise might become very useful for the next project steps. To finance their participation you should consider other options like your institution's own resources for international cooperation or the existence of other international

programs. Therefore, conduct a cost-effect analysis of their participation, because you may need those resources when more pressing needs occur.

It is advisable that the first transnational project meeting is organized by the leading institution (in this case the Military University of Land Forces). There are various reasons for that, but one of many is that the leader (project coordinator) has to present all aspects of the project realization including managerial and financial tools and rules. For that purpose, the project leader and the core team would like to invite additional staff or even external experts for whom you would not use project resources (it might be against the rules and procedures governing that project). Another important aspect you would like to take into consideration is the participation of the heads of the partner institutions in that opening session. Such top leadership engagement shows support for the project and builds a social contract between the project team and the main decision-makers.

As one of the good practices learned from previous projects, for the main project meetings we prepared minutes summarizing the discussions and capturing the decisions made. A relevant thing that is worth highlighting is that we introduced the minutes as the official document assuming that we would need to bring it up if we have certain disagreements on the project's progress with our partners. In this case, it was a wrong assumption based on previous experience with other projects, because we have never had similar problems within the IMLA Project. However, even though it was based on wrong assumptions, the minutes helped us in the coordination and management, as well as in the preparation of both the interim and the final reports.

Throughout the execution and closing phases (on a limited scale, also during the preparation phase) there will be routine and per-request reports on various aspects of the project. As a leading institution, you will need to report to the co-financing organization and require similar reports from your partners. As a project leader/coordinator you will request various types of reports from the team members, developers, and support staff. Moreover, internally, your leadership and the financial officer would like to be informed of the progress of the endeavor.

An implementation of progress tracking tools helped the project leader to be up to date with various strands of work and expenditures within the project. From a financial point of view, the co-financing National Agency provided guidelines and

principles which specified most of the responsibilities of the project to fulfill, as well as a collection of good practices. They also appointed a point of contact for our project, who was also a project supervisor and assistant. We were in constant contact with them asking tons of questions every time we had a doubt or the rules were not so clear. Their support throughout the project was a great help. So our advice is to use this as much as you feel necessary. It saves time and stress, especially when it comes to drafting and submitting interim progress and final reports.

The main tracking and reporting tool when you are dealing with a Strategic Partnership Project of the Erasmus+ Programme is the mobility tool. It is the same tool that you work with for other Erasmus+ initiatives, and as with those cases, it has a specific set of tools useful for that kind of activity. They are interconnected, so if you, and your counterparts, provide timely and accurate information there, you will benefit later when it comes to working on progress and final reports because many fields will be already filled saving you much time.

Outside the mobility tool, you would like to have information from your partners and developers with more granularity. Our experience told us to use quarterly reports (QRs), where partners were reporting each activity and expenditure with attached invoices, developers' time sheets, lists of participants, and confirmations of participants from the various mobility activities, courses, and multiplier events. The periodical reporting and collecting of financial documentation helped to be up-to-date with the progress of the project, react to problems, and catalog necessary background files for later use. And that way all was delivered in smaller, better digestible portions rather than getting them all at once.

Reporting plays a crucial role in the entire project life cycle. It fulfills a core requirement posed by the co-financing organization. It helps the project leader to manage activities and risks. It informs stakeholders and promotes the project's ideas. Aside from the required co-financing organization reports, you would like to focus on internal reports carefully addressing the appropriate message to various levels of stakeholders. One that would require your periodical reports would be the Chief Financial Officer. The rest, especially top leadership, would not be necessarily interested unless you make them so. Hence, be proactive in building a positive image of the project, and invite rectors, vice-rectors, commandants, deans, directors, and commanders to your organized events; it will create a bond. Keep in mind they are

not always interested, so push the information to them, therefore forcing the ownership, support, and promotion of the idea, which will be key for the project when you need their support during the project and after its completion, especially with the implementation of its results.

The project should shape the environment as well, although it is not the typical role of the project team. It creates a better understanding of the change, and the processes bring transparency and make the project team more known and visible. Good practice in stakeholder engagement is the inception of the Project Board. In our case, it was another good experience from previous projects. This time, the project charter was signed by the rector-commandants of all three partner academies during the project's first multiplier event. You may like to follow our example and co-organize such events with others that are planned within the tile limits of your project: the bigger the event, the better. Our first multiplier event was organized in Greece and integrated into the celebrations of the 10th Anniversary of the Emilyo Initiative (a.k.a. Military Erasmus), which provided a larger and more versatile audience than we would get organizing it separately.

Multiplier events are good opportunities to share and promote the project. The first one you would like to organize after you have developed all or at least the majority of your intellectual outputs (products). So it usually, like in our case, happens in the middle of the project duration. It gives you a chance to present not only the ideas but also to show the progress of the project and interest possible beneficiaries. You can run a questionnaire asking for opinions on your project. It is not binding but can serve to gauge interest and look for improvements when you still have time for that.

The second such event should be organized when you have all products ready and all, if not most, actions complete. This is an opportunity to present the whole picture and share your experience. If you, like us, ran the test phase, you would like to present their results. Engaging a wider audience may help to convince them to use your experience, therefore strengthening your expert and leader position, and implementing the project's outputs in their organizations. As earlier mentioned, for broader audiences you would like to organize your multiplier events together with other signature well-established conferences or forums (e.g. 10th Emilyo Anniversary, International Military Academic Forum, etc.).

The project outputs and experience from their creation and use during and after the project completion are discussed in other chapters, however, you might find it useful for a short description and opinion from the project manager's perspective. The project aimed to create the educational program International Military Leadership Academy with all supporting materials. Therefore, the partnership agreed to divide four thematic areas between themselves reflecting their expertise. Each of the partners had to develop a course card (program), an e-book, and e-learning (online) content covering the theoretical part of the course. For these parts of intellectual outputs, the project leader prepared a template and set of guidelines that helped developers to focus their efforts on the topic, not the form. For the project, these templates and guidelines served as quality assurance and control tools.

Each course was to be supported by thematic centers also co-financed from the project budget, although this action was falling under the category of exceptional costs and had to be covered following the 25/75 rule. These centers consist of a set of tools (hardware and software) and training scenarios focused on the development of specific leadership skills according to the division of work between partners (Crisis Management, Leadership in Communication, Stress Management, and Leadership, Motivation, and Influence). It was a good opportunity to use the available resources and upgrade each other's training infrastructure. The centers were used during the test phase of the project supporting training of participating cadets.

The other support elements of the program were workshops for teachers and interviews with distinguished leaders. The former was aimed at capacity building of partners to implement and be able to conduct these courses on their own. Therefore, each partner organized in their location a workshop for teachers (two teachers from each partner institution) based on their course card (program). They showed their way of conducting their courses while using participating teachers as students and also having discussion sessions where they exchanged their opinions.

The latter were the recordings of interviews with twelve distinguished individuals telling their story "My Path to Leadership", and answering the same ten questions. Each of the partners was to select four military or civilian leaders and professionally record these interviews. For this product, the project had devoted resources according to the 25/75 rule again. The main aim of this action was to provide future users with educational material they could use in conjunction with the

entire IMLA Program courses or independently. For more flexibility, the project team prepared twelve full interviews and 120 short clips (separate answers to ten questions by the twelve participating leaders). Each partner used professional technical support either contracting it or using their capabilities to produce high-quality material.

All of these outputs were encompassed by the overall programs of the International Military Leadership Academy and its Intensive Course that provided structure, aims, and expected outcomes. The way it was prepared allowed the seamless implementation of the academic programs of the participating military academies and other institutions representing the broader EU Basic Officer Education community.

The already mentioned test phase was designed to practically evaluate and validate the program and the developed products. It was agreed that the test phase would take place during the summer semester (during the last half of a year of the projects) and have a blended mobility form and was divided into two main parts that consisted of both online sessions as well as a residential phase. For this purpose, each partner selected a group of sixteen cadets, who were divided into four international teams. During the first part, each partner independently organized their course similar to the previously described workshops for teachers. Each course in this part of the test phase was attended by only one group of cadets. The one-week residential phase was preceded by online sessions allowing the participating cadets to familiarize themselves with the topic of their follow-on course using provided e-learning content and e-book. All e-learning courses were hosted centrally on the Moodle Platform of the Polish Military University of Land Forces. That way, both course organizers and participating cadets were able to focus on practical aspects of the courses during the residential phase.

The second part of the test phase was aimed at the evaluation and validation of an intensive program that included selected parts of all four courses. It was also preceded by tailored online lessons. During the two-week-long residential intensive course for the entire international group of cadets, the training was delivered by teachers and instructors provided by partners and also by invited external experts. This time all four 12-person teams took part in all activities on a rotational base (an example of the schedule is included in the Intensive Course program), and this whole

two-week program was hosted in one location – the project-leading academy. During all activities, all four forms of evaluations (included in the IMLA Book of Evaluations) were implemented to track the learning progress and opinions of participants and observers. All evaluation results were collected, analyzed, and correlated in a way to better understand which parts need improvements before the entire IMLA package was handed over to future users.

In this place, it is worth mentioning that you should be careful about being too enthusiastic about the evaluation's great results. On the one hand, you like the confirmation that you did a great job, on the other, you would like to see different "sides of the truth". Be cautious reviewing your test phase results, because of the Hawthorne effect possibility. One reason your results are great is that your test group participants know you are watching and evaluating them. The other is that you select individuals and, like us, want to have the above-average ones. We even set certain minimum criteria for test group cadets, like high language skills, to be able to freely communicate in the international environment; good academic scores, to be able to cope with additional workload not compromising their mainstream curriculum; or good annual evaluation score, to avoid behavior and conduct problems. Those aspects, if not understood properly, may distort the overall picture, lead to wrong conclusions and prevent spotting obvious shortcomings.

Proper closing of the project is, from a project management perspective, as important as the other two phases. It is time to consolidate all produced management documentation to prepare the final report and archive it for possible audit and future use. It is also a good moment to review again all developed intellectual outputs checking their consistency and standard alignment. Before uploading them to the Erasmus+ dissemination platform, you might like to be sure you have the latest versions, with all proper logos, disclaimers, and appropriate license markings (we have used open-source license descriptors). You might find it difficult to upload their big files such as multimedia or e-learning course content. Here you have various options to tackle this issue. One of which is uploading the materials to a hosting platform (e.g. Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.) and providing them links to the Erasmus+ platform. You would sometimes like to limit access to the developed outputs (we did that with our first strategic partnership project), but here you need to have a valid

justification to do so, and permission from your project supervisor from the co-financing organization.

The next step will be collecting all necessary documents that need to be submitted together with the final report. The specific list you will find in the guidelines for the project execution and your contract with the co-financing organization. You may also have an easier job to do, because some organizations, like the Erasmus+ in their mobility tool, have a list of attachments you need to upload while finalizing the report. Moreover, you may like to prepare yourself for a more detailed audit from the sponsoring organization, especially if it is your first project. Do not worry, it is normal practice, and if you are prepared it should go smoothly. The scope of such audits is described in the rules governing the program. Therefore, you should be able to sort the necessary documentation and support materials for each next step.

When drafting your final report, you would like to prepare it in an easy-to-understand way. The report is going to be read by external evaluators contracted by the sponsoring organization, and they will review the previously submitted application and interim progress report. Therefore, do not simply copy parts from there changing only the future tense to past tense phrases, they will quickly spot those and grade your report with lower results, even if you properly documented and executed your project. It will take time and no little challenge to summarize all actions and achievements of the project and fit them in the final report's limited-space sections. However, you might be sure that the evaluators will reward your frankness and effort.

An important part of the final report is the financial statement, but if you did your homework properly during the project then it would be your easiest task. Be sure you check every expenditure with rules and eligibility criteria and that the proper invoices and contracts (originals) were applicable. Pay special attention to expenditures from the "exceptional costs" category, where you need to indicate and provide proof of which parts were covered with partnership institutions' budgets and which from the project budget. Remember that most sponsoring organizations transfer project budgets in tranches. Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Projects receive their grants in three parts: first at the beginning of the project, second after approval of the interim progress report, and third, as reimbursement, after approval of the final report and its financial statement. You must be prepared for securing necessary assets from your own institution's budget, especially when you schedule

expenditures very close to the start of the project and in the vicinity of interim progress report submission. Also, something which should not be a big secret, you need to close all payments before the end date of the project, which means all invoices and transfer/payment confirmations dates must be within the project duration if you want them to be eligible and accounted for. Otherwise, such costs would need to be your or your partners' contribution to the project, which is not bad, but you may find it difficult to explain that situation to your Chief Financial Officer.

Alongside the preparation of the financial statement for the final report, it is recommended to create an internal financial report for your Chief Financial Officer. He/she would request this in a form that is approved and used internally in your institutions and is for sure different from the one required by the Erasmus+ Programme. Moreover, if you are managing a project where your institution is the leader of a consortium (partnership) then the Chief Financial Officer will require a detailed financial report indicating clearly which parts were paid to partners and how much you owe them after your final report is approved and the last installment is transferred to the project account. For that purpose, both the online final report's financial statement and quarterly reports become very useful. In our case, they became even more than useful, because when we were closing the IMLA project, we had a new project leader and a financial assistant that were not entirely familiar with the operational documentation made by the previous members. However, again, the continuity was assured by the constant cooperation of the project leader and senior subject matter expert, as well as proper and detailed documentation provided a strong base for drafting required reports.

With the final reimbursement received and respective partners' shares paid, it was time to officially request closing the project account and archive project documentation, but before you disband the project team, you may consider reviewing and submitting a plan for the implementation of project outputs. It might be an easy step and simply a natural consequence of earlier discussions and actions aimed at engaging certain stakeholders. Still, sometimes it may be difficult or even impossible if there was a change in key leadership positions and new decision-makers are not aware of or are even against the project and change. Such situations are not sudden, and even in the worst-case scenario, there are some of them left that may help you with the implementation process. For such a reason, and based on our experience,

we would advise against making implementation one of the project goals. Simply put, do not list implementation as the project goal in the project application, it will be very hard to keep that promise and it can result in the sponsoring organization evaluating you low because of not fulfilling all listed obligations.

Looking from a time perspective, it is safe to say that each project execution was an adventure that helped us bring change to our academy and the broader international community. Internally, it changed the mindsets and attitudes towards international cooperation and cadets' exchanges, and it shaped the leadership and institution perspectives. Externally, our ideas not only created changes in areas expected by project outputs but also in other institutions and within a wider European audience. They inspired others to try and move on with their ideas, convert them to actions, and make a change.

True, it was hard work, but successful completion gave us satisfaction and pride. It was a painful process, and it cost us a lot of stress and frustration, but every change creates opposition and criticism. As mentioned before, military academies and universities, although most of them academic institutions, inherently oppose change. Even with strong top leadership support for the endeavor, an institutional (corporate) memory and the tendency to complicate simple things were the sources of project team headaches and sometimes led to the modification of the original project plans to move forward. Even such important top leadership support depends on various factors and on personalities, as well as personal sympathies and dislikes which may influence the project execution. Going through various national and international projects we, the team, experienced different levels of such support or even lack of it. Sometimes the leadership refocused their attention or saw a project only through the lenses of who was involved, participated, or advocated for it, and forgot why the project was run and how their institution might benefit from it. However, as Bernard Shaw once said "progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything". So the true victory is to overcome the obstacles and make a difference. When defining our success we have looked at our students and cadets who took part in those endeavors, and who have, thanks to our efforts, become better people.

Despite the hardships during and after our projects, we have made a change. Your initiatives will bring the necessary change and improvements. Our experience

shows that results are coming slowly but surely. Be patient. Experiment and test various tools and methods, both traditional and modern, mix them, and check what works best for your team and the particular project. It might vary depending on the project aims, team composition, partners, and duration. Be brave and innovative, it will benefit you, your team, your institution, and your partners.

The best proof of this success story is that we were able to bring together the project participants over a year after its completion and convince them to contribute to the IMLA Book by sharing their opinions on the idea, reflecting on the project realizations, and their experience. Thanks to the participation in the IMLA project we came closer as a team and as friends, and we still take every opportunity to talk and meet with our international family.

Sofia Menezes

“Slowness to change usually means fear of the new.”

Philip B. Crosby

Quality assurance

Abstract

This chapter deals with project quality assurance. How relevant is quality assurance for the effectiveness and the outcomes of a project? Quality assurance can be considered one of the key processes for the success of any project. It is a proactive process that should be implemented even before the beginning of any project. By implementing quality assurance methodologies throughout the project duration, one can prevent mistakes and problems by setting the proper standards to achieve the best quality in every part of the project.

A well-implemented quality assurance process determines specifications, objectives, and assessment of project results, therefore, contributing to successful outcomes. The quality assessment process includes checklists, documentation processes, and project audits, and those dealing with these parts of the process will certify that the project's final product has followed all the predetermined quality standards. People involved in quality assurance processes will have to develop and implement quality check activities to detect existing problems and solve them before the project's conclusion. Quality assurance experts should follow a quality assurance plan and comply with quality control checklists to better assess and assure the right content, functioning, and project results. For this purpose, some steps must be followed, such as the definition of quality objectives, the roles and responsibilities of each team member, the thorough examination of results, possible necessary adjustments, and effective team communication. Once these steps are followed throughout the project, the sooner the quality assurance process starts, the easier it will be to know one has complied with and taken part in an effective and successful project.

Introduction

Quality might be difficult to define, though one can say without much doubt that it is certainly related to judgment: judgment of products or results that have been performed in a specific way according to previously established requirements. Also,

most times, what the literature shows us is quality described not so much as a technique but more as a concept, making its implementation depend to a large extent on the type of organization or process trying to abide by it (Gilmour and Hunt, 1995). Why do people worry so much about quality? Because quality can label products, procedures, and even people. According to Philip B. Crosby's major principles (1979), most of the time, problems start in planning and development, and quality is shared by every function and department meaning that whatever process we devote ourselves to, we must account for every detail from the beginning making sure everybody involved in the process is and feels accountable for the process and the posterior results.

In this chapter, we will focus on quality from the perspective of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and more specifically on quality assurance regarding projects carried out in HEI. Quality is a multi-dimensional, multilevel, and dynamic concept that is linked to the contexts of educational models, institutional missions and objectives, and specific standards within a given system, institution, program, or discipline (Vlăsceanu, L., Grünberg, L., and Pârlea, 2007). So, quality and all it involves is a concept that can no longer be disregarded by any credible institution.

If we particularize the concept of quality and reduce it to the size of a project and its various steps, one must think it is crucial that each planned task may be performed correctly and that every step is linked in a thoroughly understandable way. When we mention quality in terms of the final product we are talking about the efficient and direct result of the quality measures and procedures which are carried out during the entire project process. That is the main reason why quality assurance is crucial: it is necessary to have detailed and careful planning, to prevent any problem from appearing during the process and affecting the quality of the entire process. Effective management of an integrated process is crucial to ensure quality outcomes (Nichols, 2002). Also, quality is not only about zero defects as Crosby put it some decades ago (Crosby, 1979). Improving the performance and style of an end product are factors that must also be taken into consideration (Deming, 1994).

To be able to center our analysis in the quality assurance of HEI projects, in particular, the IMLA project, we must start by sharing some concepts connected to quality assurance, to make sure the requirements and goals of quality assurance are thoroughly understood.

Quality assurance and quality control

The two terms are connected but differ in meaning, though numerous times they are confused by users. Quality assurance (henceforth QA) deals with preventing defects and is part of the execution process. Its main goal is to assure that quality objectives are accomplished in due time. Quality control (henceforth QC) deals with identifying defects, monitoring and controlling the whole process and its main objective is to check those quality requirements are achieved. QC uses measuring and testing as its main tools.

When we talk about QA we are describing a pro-active process that is implemented even before the beginning of the process and that, when rightly applied, guarantees the proper development of approaches, methods, and techniques for more accurate project implementation. When referring to QC, we are talking about a reactive process that is only used to validate product quality and not to manage it. Also, it can be added that QA is referred to as a process-based approach, whereas QC is described as a product-based approach.

Both QA and QC bring nothing but benefits to any institution, process or project. We can name some of these benefits, though one must bear in mind these are only some examples. Regarding project management, for instance, QA and QC benefit high-quality output; reduce rework and redefinition of tasks at a later stage of the project; promote high levels of confidence and promote more motivated teams.

Quality assurance stages

It is a fact that quality assurance process stages are not the same depending on the institution or the project, and depend very much on the development and management team. Still, these differences among institutions and projects do not prevent the existence of some common procedures, such as requirement analysis; task planning; task design; task execution and problem reporting, and regression testing.

Very briefly, requirement analysis is a task to be performed by the project coordinators and it simply consists in assuring those project requirements are clear and pursuant. Task planning includes making use of efficient strategy, scope, budget, deadlines, resources, types of testing, and reporting procedures. As for the task design, it must comply with the project requirements and summarize both the

conditions and the steps that are necessary to ensure the correct execution of each task. Task execution and problem reporting can happen at the same time if need be and even generate automated reports. Lastly, regression testing is about making sure that everything is working as it should after any problem fixing. The team in charge of QA must stick to the primary plan to execute any other Quality Assurance activities, like Audit and Analysis.

Quality in higher education

According to the Analytic Quality Glossary (Harvey, 2004: 21), one of the definitions for quality is a script, in higher education, for quality evaluation processes. Williams (2016) adds that some authorities focus on accountability, though the term is rarely used and defined concerning higher education; others state that quality assurance is about ensuring the quality of teaching, and some focus more on the processes to achieve quality: quality assurance is a meta-process. Hou (2012) refers to the demand for quality assurance for HEI, due to the crescent demand for quality education. However, it happens mainly in HEI where mobility for students and staff is rising and where global networks are not only real but in use. QA can work as an engine boosting institutions to achieve excellence in higher education (Ryan, 2015) and it can also be described as a generic term for external quality monitoring and accreditation (Harvey, 2004–2020). Brown (2017) and also Westerheijden et al. (2007) believe that there are many reasons for the crescent relevance of QA in HEI. They mention the assurance of accountability for the use of public funds in higher education, to the provision of information to students regarding their decision-making processes when applying and then getting admitted to higher education institutions.

On the other hand, studies like the one by Lucander (2020) show that academic staff still find the impact of quality assurance of learning and teaching to be minor or, simply, non-existing. On the other hand, some authors refer to the fact that those directly connected with the operational level of teaching and learning seldom get to deal with the planning and organizing of systems for quality assurance (Houston & Paewai, 2013: 273). Moreover, Smidt also refers to an existing breach between the way professionals dealing with quality assurance look at it and that of staff and students (Smidt, 2015). These results are in line with Stensaker et al. (2011) who stated that in terms of HEI some groups seem to benefit most from the quality assurance processes. These groups are constituted by the institutional leadership

and the administration, which might be the ground for the academic staff and students to be less convinced of the effect of quality assurance processes on learning and teaching (Stensaker et al., 2011).

Overall, quality assurance in HEI is essential once its reports provide institutions with external, unbiased insights. Above all, these reports should be looked at as a source of feedback on partner institutions, services, and processes and as indispensable for the correct growth and development of the institution in itself.

Quality assurance of the IMLA Project

As mentioned before, quality assessment processes include several steps, namely, checklists, documentation processes, and project audits. Having several steps in a process means that those dealing with it will have to certify that the final product corresponds to all the predetermined quality standards at the end of any quality assessment project. The teams involved in quality assurance processes have very concrete and objective tasks, among which are: the development and implementation of quality check activities to detect existing problems and the creation and implementation of solutions for those possible problems before the Project's conclusion.

In line with the above and to prevent possible problems or difficulties, quality assurance team members should follow a quality assurance plan and comply with quality control checklists to better assess and assure the right content, functioning, and results. Therefore, good quality assurance plans should always include the definition of quality objectives, the roles and responsibilities of each team member, the thorough examination of results, possible necessary adjustments, and effective team communication.

Let us take a closer look at the quality assurance plan of the IMLA project. Regarding the definition of quality objectives, it can be stated that each partner had to comply with very strict and objective deadlines stipulated from the beginning of the project. Only with this type of strategy (fixed deadlines for specific goals), it is possible to carry out a multinational partner project such as IMLA within the previously agreed completion of project time. Also, not only deadlines were agreed upon and set by all partners, but also quarterly reports had to be filled out by each

partner. These reports would inform the Erasmus National Agency of the coordinating country about the progress of work and the correct completion of all necessary tasks.

Another essential part of the quality assurance plan of the IMLA project had to do with the fact that all activities were budgeted in the initial contract signed between the coordinating country and the Erasmus National Agency and also with each of the partner countries. It is relevant to highlight the fact that within Erasmus Strategic partnerships all procedures, goals, and financial matters are shared with all parties involved, agreed upon by all members, and known from the very beginning until the very end of the project duration.

Despite such thorough and transparent planning, some likely adjustments were always taken into account and made when necessary. Namely, as far as the members of each national team were concerned. It goes without saying that nothing is permanent, still one might think that project teams should remain unaltered from the beginning until the end of the Project for the sake of accomplishing all predetermined objectives. However, people's lives, both at personal and professional levels, can be quite changeable and unpredictable, contributing to some apparent and sometimes actual entropy and an effective need for immediate changes and adaptation. Flexibility and adaptability are also critical requirements for good quality assurance planning and later quality control minimal procedures.

There were necessary changes in team members within the three national teams over the two years of the project duration. What might have looked doubtful at the point when changes in teams happened became natural and unquestionable: the Project was successfully concluded, and all outcomes were accomplished. When carrying out a project with multiple partners, make sure to plan possible necessary adjustments regarding procedures and requirements but, most importantly, bear people and unpredictable situations in mind. That will, indeed, constitute a time saver in terms of planning.

As for effective team communication over the project duration, it became natural instead of becoming an issue. The Project's initial planning included regular meetings in person in each of the three countries, along with permanent online communication. According to the plan, all meetings were held, and communication between the parties became more straightforward, transparent, and trustworthy. Besides serving their planned purpose, the Transnational Project Meetings were also

a good opportunity to strengthen bonds between all members and better understand cultural differences between the countries. As a result, during the Intensive Program, executed during the last months of the project, all teams knew exactly what to expect from each other and what they could count on from each partner.

In terms of the roles and responsibilities of each team member, as far as Intellectual Outputs were concerned, all partners had to create a module (the coordinating institution had to create two modules) to be taught during the course of the project but, mainly, to be disseminated and used by any other HEI after completion of the project; they had to create and develop workshops dedicated to teachers/instructors, and organize and execute a testing phase dedicated to cadets. Another task all project partners had to comply with was the creation of a Thematic Center, per institution which should be oriented to support each institution's respective modules/workshops.

More specific tasks that each partner had under its responsibility within the above-mentioned Intellectual Outputs were: a pool of questions that resulted in a common interview to be performed with four interviewees from each partner country; specific chapters to form an IMLA e-book to accompany the residential part of the students' testing phase and Intensive Program; to create, test, review and assess all the project assessment forms and scales, in order to assure that the best quality assurance measures and goals were met by the end of the project.

Along with the above referred Intellectual Outputs, each partner had to organize a Multiplier Event, to be able to disseminate the progress and results of the project to an audience that should include members of other Military Academies, but also from civilian universities and other institutions that might be relevant in terms of posterior feedback and use of the project modules.

In compliance with the quality assurance principles, a thorough examination of results was considered since the beginning of the planning. The best example to illustrate it is the evaluation booklet of the IMLA Project, as described in the following lines.

Evaluation booklet of the IMLA Project

The Evaluation Booklet of the IMLA Project was developed within the framework of the Strategic Partnership Project "International Military Leadership Academy (IMLA)," whose focus was to create a comprehensive leadership competence development program. The Booklet provides the evaluation tools used by the IMLA Project coordination team, teachers, and observers whenever they had to assess the level of quality of the program. The Booklet also worked as a quality assurance and quality control tool because it was used to verify the effectiveness of selected courses/modules' education effects. Additionally, the book assured the quality of education and training regarding the fulfillment of needs and demands of EU military academies interested in boosting their leadership competence development systems.

The main objectives of the IMLA Evaluation Booklet were to review and check whether the IMLA Program activities and Intellectual Outputs were compatible with the guidance, standards, and ideas of the International Military Leadership Academy Project; and to assess the newly created Program content thus providing remarks and suggestions to the IMLA coordination team, course directors, authors, and cadets. Such an Assessment Booklet was essential in helping both the course director and the IMLA Project coordination team adjust the contents of the Project and assure the quality of the overall Project.

According to the methodology used in the evaluation, the existing evaluation tools should be used by IMLA participants and serve as a tool to assess them concerning the progress made throughout the Project. Namely, regarding general leadership skills and competencies, cadets' self-assessment, peer evaluation, and specific (selected Module-oriented) leadership competencies.

There was also an additional evaluation tool to be used only during the project's test phase and to focus on evaluating the developed Intellectual Outputs (i.e., e-books and e-learning) and on the classes conducted during the one-week mobility and Intensive Program. This tool was created to be filled and submitted by participating cadets and helped the IMLA Project coordination team assure quality and introduce all necessary corrections and adjustments to the programs and IOs before they were made available to future users.

Regarding the evaluators, the guidelines of the assessment booklet referred to the need to select experienced personnel to conduct the evaluation, which was

particularly relevant when observing the leadership skills and competencies of cadets and cadets in charge. One of the duties of the IMLA course director was to brief the observing/evaluating personnel on the aim and scope of the evaluation and education and training activities of the IMLA Program.

The Assessment Booklet evaluation tools include:

- Student Evaluation Form of the Program and Developed Intellectual Outputs – in these forms students/cadets were asked to assess the existing developed material (e-books and e-learning), to express their opinion on the respective Modules/Program (also residential part), and also to make use of self-assessment;
- Observer Competency Evaluation Form – this form was used by teachers/instructors when observing cadets during the one-week mobility trainings and the course of the Intensive Program for assessing cadets' leadership skills and competencies (related to the Modules) presented throughout the entire program;
- Observer Leader Form – used when teachers/instructors observed cadets' performance when in charge (during task execution or time duration) during the Intensive Program;
- Peer Evaluation Form – by completing this form each cadet expressed his/her opinion on the performance of the cadet that was in charge during the specific task or time-duration activity during the Intensive Program;
- As for the calendar for using the IMLA evaluation designated forms in the most appropriate form the most suitable way was as planned as follows:
- Student Evaluation Form of the Program and Developed Intellectual Outputs - to be filled out by students at the end of each one-week mobility and also by the end of the Intensive Program;
- Observer Competency Evaluation Form – each cadet's leadership skills and competencies were observed and assessed at the end of each one-week mobility and also by the end of the Intensive Program;
- Observer Leader Form – each cadet in charge was assessed executing a specific task or period throughout the Intensive Program duration;

- Peer Evaluation Form – each cadet assessed his/her commander (cadet in-charge) each time a change in command occurred.

Having provided an overview of the quality assurance plan of the IMLA Project, and looking back on the results of the project (it ended in 2019), we believe we can state that the three partners of this Erasmus Strategic Partnership managed to establish an appropriate mechanism for assessing all Intellectual Outputs and related activities in full compliance with the Erasmus Programme and National Agency's criteria. At the end of this chapter, we believe it is wise to affirm that for a Strategic Partnership to succeed it is crucial that throughout the project duration, all partners involved do not lose sight of quality assurance goals in terms of the mission and objectives of the project; the quality of the proposed educational program and of the academic standards regarding research the quality of the bonds and connections created during the project and, last but certainly not least, the possibility of future cooperation and networking.

All in all, quality assurance should start at the same time as the thinking and planning of a project. Only this way success can be expected and then granted when we cross the finish line. As it was the case with the International Military Leadership Academy Project.

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Paulo Machado

The IMLA engine: Inspiring internal and external changes. Promoting the idea and outcomes internally and across the IG community and beyond

Abstract

Knowledge is recognized as an asset for the progress and evolution of any organization. In the International Military Leadership Academy (IMLA) Project, the relationship in transversal knowledge on several specific areas, with a central focus on Leadership, promoting deep and lasting ties, with short and long-term positive results, with an exemplary performance of the functional dimensions of planning, organization, management, and control. In the European paradigm of change and within a social context that is intended to be increasingly common, as a consequence of globalization, there is a growing need for collaborative work, in an increasingly competitive and demanding training and integration perspective. The emphasis on intellectual capital and human resources is assumed as a guarantee of innovation and the affirmation of the institutions. The IMLA Project has developed a fruitful continuous transfer of knowledge and culture, recognized in the training for all participants and in the achieved results. The military education institutions that were part of the project promoted partnerships and synergies among themselves and with other partners, stimulating the mobility of the academic community, and testing new theories that allow updating and expanding the specific knowledge sought.

The IMLA transnational project assumed its own characteristics, without disrespecting defined objectives and outlined plans. People, in the way of relating and communicating with each other, constituted the organization process, facilitating cooperation and creating structures of coordinated collectiveness. The result is an organizational identity, reflected in behaviors, attitudes, and values. In this context, identity emerges as an organizational dimension of particular relevance for internal and external social construction, promoting involvement with the relevant environment and assuming very specific characteristics, based on built relationships. The result is an aggregation of experiences and expectations. The construction of identity was influenced by the organizational culture of the involved institutions, with spontaneously created values, through the interaction between people, with standardized norms and behaviors in a specific context.

The IMLA transnational project emphasized the importance of people in the process of building knowledge, integrating contents that contribute to enriching the military education institutions training. It is not limited to the institutions that make up the partnership, but it is

aimed for all institutions that want to enhance their training offer. With a final product consisting of several training modules and publications, already recognized and accepted by the European Security and Defense College (ESDC), through the Implementation Group (IG), the IMLA project is about communication, identity, and culture developed by the organizations. The purpose is to instill mental representations in the target audience, influencing behaviors and attitudes, which will be reflected in the acceptance and recognition of all the developed work.

Introduction

Knowledge, together with pedagogy, research, and its dissemination, is an important asset for progress and competitiveness within institutions. If a team manages to gather transversal knowledge on a certain topic in a scientific area, then it will certainly be able to understand how to promote deeper and lasting bonds, integrated in a specific reality, especially at the level of joint projects. These ties can only be developed with communication skills, facilitating the assessment of the skills of each team member, and interfering in the individual's behavior concerning the group and in the group's environment. The perspective of every work performed by a group, inserted in a multicultural social context, as is the case of the transnational project "International Military Leadership Academy" (IMLA) is very challenging. As a result of globalization, there is a growing need to work in an international environment and to invest in formation, starting with the training of the students, for complex, increasingly competitive, and demanding performances, assumed as a guarantee of innovation and consequent affirmation, not only personal but also institutional, representing the country itself. This process begins in the training phase, later reflected throughout the career in the organization's structure. It is important that higher education institutions promote partnerships and synergies, through initiatives such as the Implementation Group (IG), stimulating the mobility of the academic community, in searching for new theories that allow updating and expanding the range of knowledge.

The development of any organization does not depend only on its institutional nature. However, through the transformation of its corporate process, it has the possibility to evolve responsibly in the face of external environments and the

opportunity to deal with it. The experience of working in different social paradigms benefits organizations by allowing them to responsibly adapt to the challenges and needs of society. The IMLA Project, in its organizational structure, allowed, always, the involved institutions, to work on a coordinated basis, under well-defined goals, in which the participants, despite coming from different social realities, worked for the success of the project, supporting each other and achieving very positive results.

International IMLA Project

Although different social perspectives may be difficult tasks, the permanent constructive posture assumed in the IMLA Project was fundamental, so that the organizations themselves assume the need for a provision of services that results in added value to the society where each institution is inserted. In this respect, the possibility of exploiting the results with the support of the IG and the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), made it possible to overcome barriers that, independently, would be practically insurmountable.

As with any project, the immediate tendency is to look for the leader, the ultimate figure present in all institutional bodies. But even if it can assume the main role, it would not have strength without the support and collaboration of all the secondary agents – collaborators, partners, stakeholders – working as a team to carry out the entire process. It is also certain that they all need good leadership and the motivation transmitted by the leaders to perform their duties with determination. Only the union of hierarchies allows positive results, which are reflected internally and externally. In this organizational deconstruction, leaders are at the center of the institutional ramifications, reflecting the work of the entire group – technical, social, behavioral, and personal – giving meaning to the role played by the entire group in building the image and reputation of the institutions involved. The organization of the group is supported by the leaders, but it is all who are led to feed and support the project itself. All organizational networks, more or less complex, are made up of connecting links, which in turn had to start from a central point, of order, command, and inner voice. The exercise of leadership and motivation of leaders have an added importance for the success of the Project and the organization itself, as well as the transmission of results to all institutions that make up the IG.

The international environment is composed of organizations and institutions, represented by individuals with different experiences. This is the greatest unparalleled wealth that results from projects of this nature.

Inside the organization, everything communicates. Internally or externally, communication flows through all outlets to societies that are increasingly attentive to those who provide the best they have to offer. Invariably, organizations need inputs for their survival in different social environments. Leading implies the existence of extraordinary competencies of responsibility, authority, and power, which are not within the reach of all people, even if they try to perform their functions in the best way possible. To lead is not to order, but to persuade everyone to carry out the preconceived ideas of those who lead. Persuasion is made up of motivational stimuli that allow subordinates to emotionally perform the best technical-social tasks. Motivation thus complements the exercise of leadership and motivational theories help to understand the paradigms of the concept and how to better stimulate the human capital of organizations. It was visible, in certain critical moments of the IMLA Project, that the adoption of adequate leadership strategies allowed the balance of personal relationships with the performance of institutional tasks, resulting in services of recognized quality. Motivated people are more easily oriented toward the exercise of functions, with the attitude and emotional levels being crucial for the mental health of the individuals that make up the group. But leaders also need motivation for command and leadership exercises. The developed work contributed significantly to building the institutional image of organizations and the consequent success in different social environments is the result of hard, continuous work and the responsibility of all those involved in the process.

Usually, it is attributed to the leaders the successes and failures of the institutional image. This central role of power is also a source of motivation for the leaders themselves, who can use it from a personal or social perspective. What characterizes the IMLA Project is the constant subtle role of those who responsibly assumed the role of leader, highlighting the work developed by the entire group, sharing successes and difficulties, in the good and the less good times. Considering the contribution to the success of organizations as the central point of any project, this success invariably depends on the work done by people. Not only by the work of

the leader but also by the work of those they lead, organizations work with people for people.

This is the condition that prevails as the central matrix of the entire organizational process of any project. In a simple way, the developed work can be defined as groups of people who worked in a coordinated way to achieve common goals. These people developed their activity in the project, in a relatively undifferentiated way, that is, similar to each other. Homogeneity derives from the social valuation of organizational rationality characterized by the unity of objectives, the primacy of structuring tasks, and the formalization of the organizational process and administrative management. On the other hand, the idea of human organization was reflected in the creation of organizational conditions and working methods capable of allowing people to reach their goals and, at the same time, guiding their efforts toward organizational goals. The human conception of organization centralizes the individual's position and ensures compatibility between individual goals and organizational goals.

In a more pluralistic approach, projects of this nature allow the organization itself to the linearity of preconceived management solutions, as they provide indicators on the need to reconcile objectives, personalities, and even subcultures. In all perspectives, people involved are presented as responsible for the structuring and lasting progress of the organizations, through the developed work. With greater or lesser relevance in its construction, all stakeholders are links of ramifications created between the project itself and the organization, whether they are managers, partners, or stakeholders.

In organizations, there is a set of reasons that define people as the logical element that contributes to their survival in society. In the first place, they exist for social reasons since people are beings in social communion with a need to relate to others similarly. Then for material reasons, once the development of an organization's activity increases its efficiency, reduces the time needed to perform tasks, and awakens new knowledge. Taking advantage of synergies is another reason for the existence of organizations since two or more people together achieve a greater effect than performing tasks individually. Consequently, the operational notion is translated into the combination of social actors, defined tasks, and ways of carrying them out, through social, economic, and political goals, within a defined

framework, which allows people to develop, without constraints, their capital intelligence. Margarida Kunsch (2003) states that it is not possible to consider an organization only in its internal scope and in a static way. It must be seen in relation to a broader setting, in a holistic perspective.

The IMLA Project has always assumed itself as an open system, organized together with other interrelated elements, each one contributing and fulfilling its function, with a view to achieving pre-defined goals. Internally, it was regulated by the input of resources that allowed the system to function and by the processing and transformation of these resources, aiming to obtain desired outputs. In the external environment, it relied on a considerable number of bodies with whom it regulated its implementation. These were environments composed of society and its social actors, and with the interaction developed with similar organizations.

Operating in a dual environment – internal and external – internal factors influence the performance of activities abroad, allowing one to reflect its behavior in different social contexts. The variables for the functioning of organizations are replicated in a general environment composed of technological, political, demographic, ecological, legal, economic, and social variables, in which the transversal element is always people.

Contemporary definitions of the concept of organization indicate people as a key element for the constitution of organizations themselves: a body of thought conceived by thinking thinkers. Leaders lead the hierarchies and the team governs organizations, while stakeholders develop strategic cooperation tools for their success. The product of interinstitutional work has a reason for existence that goes beyond meeting the needs of researchers, seeking to contribute to the world in a unique way, adding a unique value, through communication.

Communication facilitates organizational systems and cooperation between people. It characterizes the organizational identity, which is reflected in people's behavior, attitudes, and values, resulting from a process of internalization of values and beliefs that emerge from the social construction of the organization itself. Through identity, the organization seeks differentiation and uniqueness in a competitive global context, with relevance for internal social construction and involvement with the relevant environment. Identity is also characterized by building relationships with elements outside the organization that will influence the way of

teamwork. In its genesis, the organization builds its identity based on internal – evaluative – and external – desired perceptions – seeking a favorable position internally and externally, which translates into the result of an aggregation of the experiences and expectations of all involved elements. In a close relationship with communication and identity, emerges the 'Organizational Culture' concept, permanently present in the IMLA Project, constituted by values and beliefs, which provide texture and guidance to the representations of identity and image. According to Edgar Schein (1992), organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions, which the group learned as it solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and which resulted in such a good way that they were considered valid, being taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel the relationship with these problems. Organizational culture manifests itself on three levels: artifacts – visible aspects such as logos, buildings, and clothing; beliefs and values – strategies, philosophies, and goals; and basic assumptions – values and beliefs rooted in the organization and that crystallize in the minds of its members.

The IMLA Project is an excellent example, in which the organizational culture was spontaneous, through the interaction between persons, standardizing norms and behaviors, where leaders instilled their own beliefs, values, and convictions, valuing the whole group.

Another important pillar that supports the construction of any organization is the 'image' that is built and transmitted outside. The image is the mirror of communication, identity, and culture that the organization manifests in its opinion. Its objective is to instill mental representations, which will influence behaviors and attitudes, later reflecting on the organization's acceptance in social media. Fundamental to the success of the developed work, image promotes the capital of trust and the quality of relationships between organizations and the target audience. The four dimensions mentioned (Communication, Identity, Culture, and Image) support the idea of 'Expressive Organization' (Teresa Ruão, 2008), and are inseparable in the affirmation of organizations, further emphasizing the importance of people and their contribution to achieving defined goals. However, in the management of any project, a process that involves four other functional dimensions must be considered: planning, organization, direction, and control.

From the Latin *gestiōne*, the action of directing, management is the activity or process of administration of any project integrated into one or more institutions. In this process, a certain number of people are responsible for applying administrative measures during the period defined for each situation, executing according to certain objectives, and combining divergent opinions in a mutual consensus, capable of acting for organizational success.

The management's task is to interpret the proposed objectives and turn them into achievable ones, through the planning, organization, direction, and control of all efforts carried out in all specific domains. Therefore, achieving results with the joint effort of the group is the primary focus of the manager, who must acquire the efficiency and operational effectiveness of the entire work group.

Considering IMLA planning, objectives, strategies and activities to be developed were defined, identified, and coordinated. Planning was the first step to define which and how many steps to reach the desired result. This management function implies the development of actions that will allow others, consecutively, to take place. It can be considered that the planning process of any project has three distinct levels: strategic, tactical, and operational.

Strategic planning should seek to define the communication objectives, what attitudes one wants to see reflected in the target audience and what behaviors one intends to see manifested in them. At the tactical level, the media and communication channels to be used. Tactical planning deals with the human and material resources needed to carry out tasks and achieve goals. The message conveyed is defined, as well as the information transmission process.

Operational planning aims to outline the distribution of tasks among employees and chronologically delimit the execution of the work. The means of transmissions and the content of communication are other aspects dealt with at the level of operational planning.

Organizational planning defines the goals for the project's success and the way to achieve the established results. The analysis of the social environment is made by defining the organization's mission, objectives, and dissemination strategy. The organization dimension made it possible to affect available resources, the determination of the tasks to be performed and the right people to perform them. It is

an ongoing process of developing relationships between the team and human capital in general, with all the necessary resources to achieve established goals.

The organization seeks to establish specific and concise objectives in its area of expertise, noticeable to be evaluated a posteriori, achievable through the performance of all protagonists with assigned functions, realistic, achievable, and established over time, according to priorities and time limits. The interrelationship between human capital and available resources reflects a rigorous organization. In this management function, the various environments are analyzed to channel the best resources and efforts for each specific situation.

People with similar characteristics and aptitudes is a practical way to unite synergies in the workgroup, allowing for better management in the execution of tasks and ease of communication between employees. Choosing the best organizational structure is essential for articulating activities necessary for the objectives.

Functions relating to certain types of activity are assigned, distinct from any other by their uniqueness and purpose; on the other hand, departmentalization is carried out, that is, similar functions are grouped together, and uniformly related. Thus, it is possible to simultaneously relate concepts such as responsibility, authority, and hierarchy. Knowing what to do, who coordinates, and what is the level of responsibility of each hierarchical level is fundamental for the success of any project.

The process of influencing the behavior of all agents who participate in the project's work activities is called 'management'. The act of directing must channel efforts to motivate others to put their intelligence capital at the service of the organization's primary objectives. The function of management and direction allows the mobilization of people to achieve organizational goals. This process determines and influences behavior, leading to the production of desired actions to achieve goals and objectives. Direction involves the practices of motivation, leadership, and communication.

Through control, it was possible to monitor activities and ensure the normal course of the entire planning process. It is through control that it is possible to compare the organization's performance with the standards previously set during the process of planning and executing tasks. Driving implies knowing the organization's

internal and external agents when adopting motivation, leadership, and communication styles.

Motivation is the reinforcement of people's will to continue their efforts to achieve the organization's goals. The stimulus for the study of motivation comes mainly from its relationship with productivity. And one of the ways to increase productivity through the best use of resources is people management. Contemporary literature is not linear in the definition of the concept, since it is a theme of an invisible construct, of widespread use in the human sciences, and approachable according to a great multiplicity of perspectives.

Leadership is the leader's ability to lead others to act in accordance with their ideas, values, and behaviors. To lead is to involve people in the discussion process to mobilize the maximum amount of human capital and intelligence. When interpersonal relationships are established with everyone involved, trust in the group and stability in leadership actions are provided. Combining what should be done and how it should be done is the matrix for effective leadership from an organizational point of view. This maxim falls on the leader, who has the role of galvanizing the entire work group towards common goals. Leadership is a process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how it should be done, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to achieve shared goals.

Communication is, along with motivation and leadership, another of the steering mechanisms, and the communicative ability of any agent is fundamental in the process of transmitting the information. Knowing how to communicate and with whom to communicate is a competitive advantage when leading work groups and building relationships with the outside world.

In addition to the mechanisms of motivation, leadership, and communication, management presupposes three other domains: responsibility, authority, and power.

In management, the term responsibility refers to the performance of an employee in relation to a duty assigned to him/her and to answer, before his superior, for his own actions. This obligation is based on the existence of a hierarchical relationship, which presupposes a formal authority to demand tasks/actions. Consequently, unlike authority, responsibility is established in the bottom-up sense of the hierarchy. It should also be noted that responsibility cannot be delegated to lower

levels of the hierarchy, and no one reduces their responsibility by delegating the authority to carry out a task to someone else.

Authority means having decision-making power over others, with a view to achieving objectives. Decision-making, the exercise of functions, and the performance of duties are due to the authority established within an organization by the leaders/managers. Authority refers to power in the sense that it is exercised within the framework of legitimacy, and, under these conditions, it becomes the exercise of a legitimate power that confers a right, which is to exercise control over others, under certain circumstances. Authority in the organization is assumed by the centralization or decentralization of decision-making actions and the fulfillment of duties. When authority is centralized, uniformity of policy and action is greater, the conflict of ideas is reduced, and divergences around practices and strategies to follow are smaller. The risk of noise in the transmission of information is consequently lower, as orders are issued directly from the top of the hierarchy. On the other hand, when authority takes on a decentralized mode, as happened in the IMLA Project, there is greater comfort and greater speed in action. Freedom of execution is greater, which avoids waiting for decisions from higher hierarchies. Confidence in people motivates them to exercise their functions. Consecutively, this trust turns into morale and cooperation, as with increasing responsibility and authority, people become more active and productive.

Responsibility and authority have a direct impact on power, which is the ability of individuals or groups to act and influence other individuals or groups. Power in the organization implies the ability to influence others through reward, punishment, or persuasion. However, it is natural that there is the acquisition, reduction, or distribution of power within a group. Power is not an attribute of an individual, nor something that derives exclusively from the formal hierarchical authority provided by organizations to individual and collective actors, but rather a relationship between actors, who define their strategies and objectives in a concrete action system.

The management function that compares the performance achieved and the pre-established standards, introducing corrective measures necessary to obtain the desired results, is called control. As organizations are social subsystems based on people with the common objective of achieving previously established goals and results, it is through the functions of planning, organization, direction, and control and

monitoring mechanisms that internal and external subsystems are developed that work in close cooperation with the human capital involved. This cooperation of forces is achieved by joining efforts in the group, promoted by communication and feedback between all organizational branches. The success of the IMLA Project, as well as that of any organization, depends, first, on the success of its stakeholders, who, through leadership and motivation, achieve personal fulfillment.

Can it be said that the International IMLA Project fulfilled its mission to its fullest? The mission is outlined by the project's strategic purposes, involving the entire organizational structure. It is the starting point for the definition of strategic objectives and the support of organizations, assuming the fulfillment of defined objectives. The clarity of the definition of the mission allows the clear and realistic definition of the objectives, so it seeks to answer succinctly what the final product it offers, what is the area of application of that product, what is the operating philosophy regarding supply and demand, how it is distinguished before other possible offers and what image and identity it conveys. By being broadly defined, a space of freedom is created that allows the expansion of activities without having to change the mission, considering the claims of the community where it operates, reflecting quality, innovation, and growth. So, we can say that the IMLA Project has fulfilled its mission to the full, and continues to do so, in a wide spectrum of possibilities, reaching the presupposed objectives. The objectives are presented as results of a concrete order. All objectives have targets that are intended to be achieved in the short, medium, or long term. The achievement of objectives takes place at the stage when an adequate level of maturity is reached to deal with complex tasks and manage disagreements in a creative way. The group's energy is channeled into task performance. The focus on the attention of group members' expectations management should be based on perceived objectives that encompass "SMART" characteristics (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Timed) (Paulo Lourenço Afonso, 2010). The goals of the IMLA Project are achieved whenever an entity or institution uses the products resulting from the project and applies them in training. It means that resources are not exhausted at the end of the project, but rather the starting point and an opportunity for institutions to value their training in the areas of leadership, motivation, and communication. The processes and behaviors applied to exercise leadership is unique to each organization since the contingencies

and situations in which they occur continue to be a fundamental variable. Rego et al. (2016) state that “different activities require different types of skills”.

Conclusion

The symbiosis between organizations and society inevitably involves the acceptance of social obligations and responsibilities arising from the positions they integrate into the social environment. The concept of leadership is fundamental, assuming that leaders are the engine of the entire functional process of organizations. The leader is one of the main elements for building a trustworthy institutional image, both internally and externally. Internally, the concepts of leadership and motivation reflect the complexity of maintaining an organization in view of the demands of all organizational structures. Externally, the interaction with other organizations depends on the relationship (not always easy) built. The success of organizations involves an active relationship between the leader and all the agents that make up the environment where he or she exerts influence, that is, the leader must act together with subordinates and partners so that all parts follow the same path, the same goals, and the same ideals. The construction of the image and reputation is done precisely by those who interpret and assess the organization from the outside, whether public, partners or the media. The difference is that organizational image is a description of the various interpretations that people in the organization make of what others think, while reputation describes the set of attributes that people outside the organization attribute to it. This paradigm persists at the social level, and any organization can only achieve this social environment if the overall assessment of its assessments is positive. For this rooting, the ideals of social responsibility developed before society contributes, that is, the organization must address social issues, in addition to strictly financial, technical, and legal issues, which are nonetheless important for its relationship with other organizations. However, the essence of social responsibility is underlined in the perception that the actions of an individual have consequences in the lives of others, expanding the individual vision to the entire social system.

Since organizations are subsystems of society, social responsibility must be a strategy to support the system. The ultimate exponent of an organization's social

responsibility is the intentional interaction with other organizations, groups of citizens, and stakeholders at the community level. It is this direction of valuing citizenship that must be taken to promote a new institutional paradigm based on active and participative management. Citizenship transposes the parallel concept of social responsibility, being related to the impact that corporations have with their activity in the community and with the way in which they generate that same impact in their relationship with the social environment in which they operate. Given the current situation of organizations, the role of the leader becomes essential for the success of any organization, through the individual's personality, confidence, and form of expression. All theories of leadership and motivation that outline the profile of the "ideal leader" seem to emphasize a set of important characteristics, yet specific to each situation, each organization, each leader, and each target audience. Putting existing theories into practice will always be an arduous task, not least because of the possibility of discovering more theories. There are exceptional individuals who manage, in their own way, planned, spontaneous, studied, to lead as many people as possible to follow their ideas and build successful local, national, or international organizations across borders.

All developed products of the IMLA International Project are recognized and accepted by the European Security and Defense College (ESDC) through the Implementation Group (IG). The main goal of this successful project is to contribute to increasing and enriching all Military Higher Education institutions offer in the hope that they influence behaviors and attitudes, which will be reflected in the acceptance and recognition of all the developed good work.

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Marta Nowakowska

From partnership to the family: making a bond from the clash of cultures

Abstract:

The chapter deals with the topic of intercultural issues experienced by the project participants. Partners from Poland, Portugal, and Greece participated in the IMLA project. Each group belongs to a different circle of the so-called Western culture. The English language was used. Working meetings were held in training sessions over two years (October 2017 - September 2019). The IMLA Family was created from the initial mistrustfulness, and the project members are still in touch and ready to work on further projects.

The chapter aims to answer the following questions:

- ✓ *What are the pros and cons of formal and informal relations within the project?*
- ✓ *What factors played the leading role in the project team becoming friends?*
- ✓ *How did the partner's different cultures influence working in the project team?*
- ✓ *What were the estimated Cross-Culture Communication (CCC) skills of the project team members, and what (if any) project activity was used to improve them?*
- ✓ *How did cross-project communication look like?*
- ✓ *How did project work develop intercultural communication skills among project participants?*
- ✓ *What difficulties did the project participants see, and how did they deal with them?*

The chapter will be written based on the literature on CCC and a research questionnaire that all project participants will answer.

Introduction

International projects are always challenging. Above all, project participants ask themselves questions about cooperation for years to come and communication between people of different nations. Moreover, effective communication is the key to success.

There are many problems and so-called "communication noise" on a national level, which often lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. People from different social groups use other word symbols and different phrases. In the IMLA project, there were people from three countries: Poland, Portugal, and Greece, from different groups - military and civilian, which was an enormous challenge for the project participants.

The chapter deals with the topic of intercultural issues experienced by the project participants. Partners from Poland, Portugal, and Greece participated in the IMLA project. Each group belongs to a different circle of the so-called Western culture. The English language was used. Working meetings were held in training sessions over two years (October 2017 - September 2019). The IMLA Family was created from the initial *mistrustfulness*, and the project members are still in touch and ready to work on further projects.

Culture, Cross-Culture Competences, and Intercultural Communication

Culture is considered a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of transmitted phenomena through social learning in human societies.

In the Ethnological Dictionary (Sokolewicz, 1987, p.89-93), "culture" is defined as: "the definition of the totality of the products of social man, structured into a distinct aspect of social life, both of the human species as a whole and of individual societies, ethnic and local groups, social strata and classes in their historically diverse and changing dependencies on the environment." As can therefore be seen, culture is defined according to circumstances and context.

Some aspects of human behavior, social practices such as culture, expressive forms such as art, music, dance, ritual, religion, and technologies such as tool usage, cooking, shelter, and clothing are considered cultural universals for all human societies.

Melville Herskovits, in his work "Man and His Works," (Herskovits, 1948) gave a list of characteristics of culture itself:

- Culture is not an innate but an acquired phenomenon;
- Every culture derives from physical, biological, and psychological elements that are characteristic of the human condition;

- Every culture is structural (it is organized);
- Every culture encompasses most aspects of human life (multifaceted);
- Every culture evolves (dynamic and changeable);
- There are certain regularities in a culture that make it possible to analyze it with scientific methods;
- Every culture is a tool with which the individual adapts to his environment and finds the means to express his creative qualities.

The concept of material culture covers the physical expressions of culture, such as technology, architecture, and art. In contrast, the immaterial aspects of culture, such as principles of social organization (including practices of political organization and social institutions), mythology, philosophy, literature (both written and oral), and science, comprise the intangible cultural heritage of a society.

For example, in 1952, two American anthropologists who analyzed this phenomenon, Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952), identified and compiled a list of 164 different definitions of culture in their book "Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions." Their number has continued to increase, and the term's meaning has been highly diversified, making it difficult to find an explanation common to all points of view. In conclusion, we can say that culture is the learned and shared knowledge that specific groups use to generate their behavior and interpret their world experience. It comprises beliefs about reality, how people should interact with each other, what they "know" about the world, and how they should respond to the social and material environments in which they find themselves. It is reflected in their religions, morals, customs, technologies, and survival strategies.

- Banks: consisting primarily of the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies;
- The essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the group members interpret, use, and perceive them;

- The values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives distinguish some people from others in modernized societies; it is not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies;
- People within a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors in the same or similar ways.

From the earliest years of life, every member of society adopts a particular pattern of thinking, feeling, and behaving and rules to live by. This process of acquiring cultural competence, or more simply of learning culture, is called enculturation. Its most important features are, above all, its necessity (through its adaptive character), its indispensability for the transmission of cultural heritage, and its relativism (it refers to a given cultural system).

So culture is a set of learned phenomena, which means that culture is not transmitted biologically, through genes, but through a process of learning, or so-called enculturation. Therefore, cultural phenomena do not include the sweat on the forehead of a running man, but the way he wipes it with a handkerchief held in his pocket/sleeve. Culture includes the way perspective is rendered in painting and sculpture, not the ability of a person's eyes to see depth. Culture can include anything a person can learn - knowledge, information about things and people, i.e., how the world works, and values, i.e., norms indicating the right ways to behave, think, or experience in certain situations. We speak of the inheritance of biological traits but also cultural heredity. Generally speaking, it is the heritage of human culture.

Each culture has its moral principles and precepts and can only be understood if we study it as a whole. One cannot, therefore, belittle the customs or values of cultures other than one's own. These customs have meaning for the people who live in that culture, which cannot be trivialized.

The term "cultural competence" is based on a great deal of research and scholarly thinking and requires learning and practicing. It can sound like an overwhelming concept to take in, particularly considering how many different cultures there are worldwide and how each individual within a culture is just that: one person with unique feelings and perspectives on their own cultural beliefs and values.

"Cultural competence is a set of convergent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that combine to form a system, groups of specialists and enable the system and the

specialists to act effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al, 1989)—being culturally competent means having the ability to function effectively in other cultural settings (King et al, 2007). Operationally defined cultural competence integrates and adapts knowledge about individuals and groups of people to specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in relevant cultural settings to increase the quality of services and thereby achieve better outcomes (Davis, 1997).

Someone's cultural awareness "is their understanding of the differences between themselves and people from other countries or other backgrounds, especially differences in attitudes and values." According to Michael Winkelman (Wilkelman, 2005), awareness of cultural differences and their impact on behavior begins with intercultural effectiveness. He states that "cultural self-awareness includes recognizing one's cultural influences upon values, beliefs, and judgments, as well as the influences derived from the professional's work culture." Cultural awareness is the first step in becoming proficient in working well with people from various cultures. Conclusion - to be "culturally aware" is to understand that cultural differences exist, promote cultural diversity by being nonjudgmental, and be sensitive to and respect those differences when interacting with people whose customs, traditions, and worldviews may be different from our own.

People must be aware that culture is a dynamic concept. They must question the idea that one culture is better than another or a hierarchy of cultures. Valuing and respecting diversity through a positive and open attitude allows people to analyse cultural differences and evaluate them. Reflecting on their own culture enables them to develop sensitivity to other cultures.

Cultural sensitivity is the ability to change working methods and develop skills and strategies to work positively in an area of cultural diversity (Husain, 2005). For each person, this means adapting communication strategies to the audience, taking into account cultural differences in planning and teaching.

[I1:]Cooperation in an international project is an open-minded process. It is working with each other, adapting our behavior for the best solution for the project's success. Acting this way makes it very easy to work as a team, respecting each other. So, the difficult part is only in the beginning. Once we get to know each other, all

barriers fall down, and working in an international team is the same as working in an internal team¹¹.

In the case of international projects, we have to take into account the adaptation of cultural differences. There may be communication problems - language issues, both verbal and non-verbal communication.

[I2:]Thanks to the implementation of the IMLA project, I got to know the cultural diversity of both Greek and Portuguese partners, but at the same time, I saw that we have a lot in common. All team members, regardless of nationality, were focused on creating a new quality in the field of military education, which, due to its international character, would increase the attractiveness of the content conveyed and motivated students more to acquire knowledge. Such an ambitious goal meant that our joint commitment and spending many hours on joint organizational and conceptual efforts allowed us to get to know each other very well and establish very close friendships. Today, after the completed project, it is much easier for me to establish contact with foreign partners, propose cooperation or take advantage of the possibility of developing on the basis of their scientific and didactic base.

In the case of IMLA, all participants communicated in English. Sometimes insufficient knowledge of the language caused "communication noise," but with the cooperation of the whole team, we managed to reach an agreement. Two years of the project also made it possible to adjust to the differences in the perception of reality. It is noteworthy that people who joined the project in its course had problems adjusting to the participants. However, as all participants belonged to the so-called Western culture, the problems were more about individual personality traits than cultural issues.

Formal and informal relations within the project

The participants were initially only contacted formally; information, plans, and schedules were sent out through emails. The only direct contact was with people signing cooperation agreements.

¹¹ Respondents, i.e. project participants who were interviewed online by the author of this article between April and June 2021, are written in italics. They are written as I1 - interviewer 1, I2 - interviewer 2 etc.

Remote communication before getting to know each other personally is not advisable for an extended period. It promotes stereotypical thinking about specific nations.

A stereotype is a "standardized mental picture held in common by individuals of a social group based on oversimplified opinions and incorrect and uncritical judgments." We can say that stereotypes are distorted views of an individual, another race, another ethnic group, or even another culture. Stereotypes represent a shortcut in collecting, processing, and interpreting information about a cultural group by perceiving people according to their social categories rather than their characteristics. This "mental shortcut" is used as a handy tool to help us reduce our memory load by making inferences and predictions about the group without perceiving it first-hand.

The problem with stereotypes is that it is challenging to remove positive or negative ones once they are established. Just because one member of a race, gender, age group, or culture acts in a certain way does not mean that every other person in that group will act in the same way.

Stereotypes are mainly about gender and nation/country. For example gender profiling:

- Men are strong and do all the work;
- Men are the "backbone";
- Guys are messy and unclean;
- Men who spend too much time on the computer or reading are geeks;
- Women are not as bright as men;
- Women cannot do a job as good as men;
- Girls are not good at sports;
- Any feminine man is gay, and any masculine woman is a lesbian;
- Homosexuality is immoral, wrong, and an abomination.

Stereotypes about cultures and countries as a whole:

- All white Americans are obese, lazy, and dim-witted.;
- All Greeks are lazy and hate work;
- All Arabs and Muslims are terrorists;

- All people who live in England have bad teeth;
- Italian or French people are the best lovers;
- All Blacks outside of the United States are poor;
- All Portuguese are sad and melancholic. And can't speak English;
- All Jews are greedy;
- All Asians are good at math;
- All Asians like to eat rice and drive slow;
- All Polish people are drunks and twisters.

Stereotypes are difficult to change. There are two ways this can happen: intergroup contact - mutual prejudices can be reduced due to increased and direct intergroup contact. Contacts must be frequent, and regular, with the involvement of social institutions and moral authorities. The second way is cooperation: during intergroup contacts, even if forced or arranged, repeatedly (joint project).

Moreover, for this reason, working together for two years has produced positive, tangible benefits. Frequent meetings, discussing problems on an ongoing basis, and the diversity of ideas have shown that going beyond one's own culture and understanding others is the best solution.

[I3:]I wouldn't call them stereotypes, but I admit I anticipated a little of the personal relationship between the participants of the 3 institutions. In our first and second meetings, our relationship was a little cold, studying each other, divided by countries. From the third TPM, a 'click' occurred and everybody mixed and started a healthy relationship, for life.

As far as formal communication is concerned, it is essential at the beginning of cooperation. This statement is emphasized by the respondents, stating that: *[I4:]imagining cooperation with partners from military universities of other countries, I expected that similar elements of the organizational culture of each army, such as discipline, orienting military training to improve the skills needed in the art of war, formal, clear procedures and generally proactive attitudes resulting from the voluntary accession to the military, would be a great help.* It helped meet on culturally neutral ground, assuming that military people or people connected to the military are involved. A situation can be seen here where a cultural area was chosen in which to

move about. The military and academic cultures were put before national cultures. Such a move was advisable in the beginning. Before the project, participants got to know each other, overcome language barriers and possible stereotypes, and worked together.

However, it should be emphasized here that a formal attitude makes sense when the project assumption is to keep it until the end of the project and not to enter into informal relations, when the majority of the group decides to change the relationship, remaining formal causes national stereotypes to deepen or builds up stereotypical attitudes towards individuals.

[15:]*When it comes to stereotypes about the Portuguese, I imagined them as people approaching their official duties with a lot of distance and always having time for everything, and when it comes to such a positive attitude to life and inner peace, they have been confirmed. However, a big surprise for me was the high executive discipline and principled approach to the timely implementation of tasks. From the Greeks, I expected traditional methods of work and a conservative approach to the issues of work organization, and it was confirmed. I did not know, however, that in the military environment they can also enjoy life, and combine professional duties with the desire to meet people and spend time together.*

The quoted statement shows a preference for local military culture over national culture, which was a way for this person to overcome stereotypical thinking.

[16:]*I did not have any stereotypes about the two other cultures in the very beginning. Over the months of the project, I might have created some... And this happened because some situations tended to happen in a more frequent way than others and we learned to understand the 'whys' of many things.*

Or:

[17:]*I had some stereotypical attitude towards some of our partners. Some remained and were proven and ceased to be stereotypes but became reality. Some faded away and I was proven wrong. However, none of my slight objections were in the category of strong opposition to anyone or any nation. It was an experience with some individuals, not their nationality.*

The advantages of informal relationships are easy to analyze. First and foremost, the elimination of stereotypical thinking about others. Great freedom to

communicate one's needs and fears without fear of lack of understanding. It removes national restrictions and allows a different, relative perception of others in the world. The boundary between formal and informal attitudes is very fluid and depends on the person's individual characteristics in question.

[18:]*The Greek culture seems to be quite different from the Portuguese in terms of being eager to learn and interiorize new things and adapt to changes...on the other hand, I was quite surprised to find Polish culture a bit more old-fashioned than the Portuguese as far as gender perspectives are concerned.*

Or:

[19:]*I realized the differences between people from other cultures and connecting behaviors. Sometimes I didn't know how to behave with such cultural manners. These experiences made me richer and more open to other people.*

What is essential during an international project is emotional intelligence among the participants, no matter which nation. Emotional intelligence (otherwise known in a psychological term as Emotional Quotient or EQ (Goleman, 2012) is the ability to understand, use and manage one's emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and resolve conflict. Emotional intelligence helps you build stronger relationships, succeed in school and work, and achieve professional and personal goals. It can also help turn intentions into action and make informed decisions about what is most important.

Four main characteristics commonly define emotional intelligence (Collins&O'Brien, 2011):

- Self-management - with this skill, you can control impulsive feelings and behavior, healthily manage your emotions, take the initiative, meet commitments and adapt to changing circumstances;
- Self-awareness - you recognize your own emotions and their influence on your thoughts and on your behavior. You know your strengths and weaknesses and believe in yourself;

- Social awareness - you are empathetic. You can understand other people's emotions, needs, and concerns, pick up on emotional signals, feel socially comfortable and recognize power dynamics within a group or organization;
- Relationship management - you know how to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team and manage conflict.

The appearance of people with a high level of emotional intelligence in the project group significantly accelerated the change from formal to informal relationships.

[I6:]I would confess more time to increase interpersonal relations in an informal way in order to learn from each other and break cultural differences.

In the project group, there were a couple of people with a very high level of Emotional Intelligence. They were the first to move from formal to informal relationships. They did it in a way that was acceptable to the whole group, and they guarded the relationship afterward.

To sum up - in international projects and local projects - formal relations are necessary at the beginning of the project. It is necessary to establish firm rules. Nevertheless, in my opinion, it is easier for an international group to move to an informal relationship once the rules have been established. Here the most crucial role is open-mindedness, curiosity about foreign cultures and the world, and broadening one's horizons.

Intercultural communication skills among project participants

The European Union is home to 450 million people from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds [Europa.eu]. The movement of people between the Member States has increased significantly over the last few years, and this trend is expected to continue. As a result, we encounter diversity daily. In order to be able to solve the pressing problems of today, it is necessary to be able to find one's way in a multicultural world.

[I9:]The international environment is vibrant, new, and challenging. It requires tolerance and assertiveness, but also an open mind, proactiveness, and willingness to learn.

How do cultures differ?

- Spatial distance;
- Perception of time;
- Way of communicating;
- Hierarchy;
- Group or individual;
- Masculinity-femininity.

Effective intercultural communication is an essential skill for anyone working across different countries or regions to establish harmonious relationships and avoid conflict. It is essential to accurately and appropriately transfer information across countries and cultures. It is important to remember that getting to know people and working with them will:

- Develop new perspectives and points of view;
- Become aware of the relativity of one's views and preferences;
- Discover and benefit from new ways of thinking and behaving;
- Develop new ways of dealing with specific situations and solving problems.

The first and most important result of successful intercultural communication is to open one's mind and get a different perspective on the world around us and the actions of the people around us.

[14:]Cooperation in an international project is open-minded, is working with each other, and adapting our behavior for the best solution for the success of the project. Acting this way makes it very easy to work as a team, respecting each other. So, the difficult part is only in the beginning. Once we know each other, all barriers fall down, and working in an international team is the same as working in an internal team.

Despite language differences, communication is possible. Furthermore, informal relationships facilitate relationships and distance from each other, especially when the language of communication is foreign to each national group.

[I7:]*They allowed me to develop the English language and acquire verbal and non-verbal communication skills through the exchange of experiences that was made possible.*

Or:

[I10:]*The biggest difficulty is the language, which over time is eventually overcome.*

Working in an international team teaches everyone. Above all, it teaches you to approach problems differently.

[I3:]*Undoubtedly, the experience gained during the project developed my sensitivity to listening to different ways of understanding reality, and approach to the professional and private life of people who live in other countries. Today, when I think about cooperation with people from other cultures, I leave a large margin for what foreign partners will propose. Due to the fact that we perceive certain things differently, we are able to achieve more and innovative ideas are born much more easily. Having experience of international cooperation, I am also more willing to look for opportunities to take advantage of a culturally different view of problems related to similar issues at our university. (...) I truly believe it made me become more tolerant of other people's perspectives and beliefs...I did not have any special assumptions. On the contrary, I think I became more understanding of different visions.*

During the project, it turned out that despite the cultural differences between the groups, they found common norms and values (military and academic environment). The participants referred to one cultural area - Europe. It turned out that when dealing with non-European people, the differences were much more visible and more difficult to accept and understand.

[I5:]*It has already happened in international missions, such as in Afghanistan. Where I thought I would find people very different from me, which ended up fading over time. In fact, I was very impressed by the similarities between us. Within the European Union (or Europe in a broader sense), there is no great difficulty in intercultural communication. Certain political groups may have us believe that it exists, but in reality, people have a good background and are always willing to collaborate.*

Working as part of an international team, one could distinguish new attitudes in participants:

- Reciprocity;
- Openness;
- Readiness to take the risk;
- Breaking of stereotypes;
- Desire to learn, cognitive flexibility;
- Adaptability to change;
- Empathy;
- Respect for cultural heritage;
- Active imagination;
- A disposition to cooperate.

Intercultural competence and communication are new qualities, attitudes, and forms of communication in a new intercultural space. Communication is interaction, and competence is based on attitudes.

In the case of the IMLA project, the participants created their own culture. A culture that became a "social game" and the identity marker of the participants. A system of accepted basic meanings or values emerged, and it became a pattern of behavior for the future.

The IMLA Family

[I11:]Family. Just family. Close friendships with some of the project team members. Not all of them. So, the IMLA family to me does not mean all the participants of the IMLA project. And it is a group of people that I feel relaxed and safe being around them. And I know that if in need I can count on them, and they count on me alike.

The two years of close cooperation have been two years of a group of people getting to know each other. People were separated by geographical distance, language, and even religion. They had no shared history. However, they formed a basic unit for functioning in society—a family.

From the anthropological perspective, kinship is a social bond determining relations between two or more individuals based on descent or marriage (Burszta, 1998). Along with economy, politics, and religion, kinship is among the primary institutions shaping social life. Among other things, it determines the legal order in a given group. People who are classified as kin have, concerning others, certain rights and duties.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, culture is not inherited but learned early. This process is called enculturation. Enculturation is a period of growing into a culture. In the international IMLA project, it can be said that the group of participants has formulated its cultural code - norms, values, group bonding events, the language of communication, symbols of gestures, and facial expressions.

[I2:]The IMLA Family is the best example of how to work as a team, professionally, developing a very healthy private relationship. Naturally, we became very good friends, and we know we can count on each other in every situation being all over the world. An experience for life!

Finding their way into the intercultural reality of the project by referring to joint military and academic norms helped a lot for those project participants who did not find it easy to make contacts.

[I12:]The IMLA family is a group of people who share a passion for professional military academy teaching. What distinguishes us from others is the willingness to selflessly dedicate ourselves to achieving the common goal of developing the educational opportunities of our universities and ourselves. Building a transnational understanding and understanding of the cultural differences of the people of Europe and, at the same time, skillfully finding common values on the basis of which it is possible to build a new quality, motivate each other to self-development, and share experiences and knowledge. Above all, however, it is a greater ability to establish close, friendly relations with people who live on the other side of the continent on a daily basis but have the same proactive way of thinking.

The common goal was crucial. The project participants were passionate people who aspired to create a program dedicated to cadets from military colleges. The participants did not split themselves into subordinate goals but tried to achieve the initial objectives at all costs.

[I9:] *This is a group of dear friends you can count on and I know you can do wonderfully creative things with them. People taking part in the project are exceptional people who feel the need to step out of the usual patterns and solutions to prepare students for new challenges.*

IMLA Family was defined very nicely by one of the participants:

[I13:] *The group of military and close-to-military people who:*

- *Care about the security of Europe and own nation;*
- *Want to change something in the education system for young people;*
- *Would like to live in a safe environment, but they are active and do something in that area;*
- *Are open to other nations, cultures, and differences;*
- *Can cooperate in order to provide peace, knowledge, common understanding in a local and global environment;*
- *Are happy to have the possibility to learn about new ideas, people, behaviors and overcome obstacles;*
- *Are positive and prefer to have fun instead of complaining.*

To sum up, we are leaders!

Based on the experience of the IMLA project, there are principles to follow to build a team that becomes a family:

1. Carry out a cultural reconnaissance of the nation with which you are establishing relations. It would be good if this group belonged to a similar subculture as our own (military culture, academic culture, artistic culture)

2. Do not be afraid of change. Invite everyone to be fully involved in the change process. As the participants in such a change learn about the power of the project, their fear of change will begin to diminish, and they will begin to feel valued.

3. Choose the right team. These people should be professionally and factually prepared for the tasks ahead of them and open to diversity, tolerant, adaptable to the situation, and friendly. Remember to pay attention to the Emotional Intelligence of your team members. Maybe not everyone has a high EQ level, but there should be some people with high EQ in every team.

4. Adapt the rules and procedures to the project participants. Remember not to change them during the formal relationship. Furthermore, later, when the relationship is relaxed, keep the rules constant. Deadline, finances, and evaluation of activities must remain the same regardless of likes and dislikes prevailing emotions.

5. Motivate your people. Sufficient praise, meetings, and discussions are necessary to make each team member feel responsible for the project as a whole.

6. Throughout the project, make sure that the team does not just bond for the project's duration but that the people involved become friends. So that, in the end, they are a FAMILY.

Instead of a summary, let me quote two of the project's participants:

[I8:]*IMLA Family...a group of people who grew as better human beings after a simple strategic partnership and became friends for life. And that says it all!*

And:

[I3:]*One can say that it was our Greek-Polish-Portuguese wedding.*

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Experience from development of the intellectual outputs

Abstract

This article aims to present the experience gained during the development of the intellectual outputs that were produced by the members of the IMLA project team responsible for the development of the theoretical materials necessary for the acquisition of basic knowledge by future IMLA course participants, and the workshop curricula for each thematic module. The main elements which were analyzed in this study were: the module descriptions, the e-book, the e-learning course, the program of short trips for students and teachers, and the program of the intensive course.

The main assumption of the authors of this article was to identify important clues for potential entities interested in using IMLA programs, as well as for teams undertaking efforts of cooperation within other projects similar in theme or organization to this project. The analysis of particular stages, which were arranged according to the chronology of projects implemented within the project, referred to as the conceptual stage, the stage of establishing cooperation, the stage of developing programs, the stage of project implementation, and the stage of evaluation. The structure of the article was also adopted in accordance with this division. The developed conclusions and recommendations were created as a result of the analysis of the areas of intellectual activity realized by the authors, which were focused around the following research problems:

- How did the concept of the module develop?*
- Where did the authors get ideas for content and methods – was it an experience or experiment?*
- What tools were needed for workshops and why?*
- What was the assessment of the module by the participants?*
- What changes have been made by the match of the module to the participants' needs? Why exactly such ones?*
- What are the teacher's thoughts on putting theory into practice? Has the initial assumption changed over the course of the project?*
- What conclusions do teachers have after completing the project?*
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of new tools / new conditions / with alternative partners?*

The conceptual phase.

The first inspirations to identify the need for a stress management module were the experiences gained by the authors during overseas military missions and work at the military academy. Observations and conclusions reported by both graduates of the Land Forces Military Academy and the staff of commanders at various levels of command indicated the need for the development and shaping of competencies in the field of stress management as a key skill used during the implementation of combat tasks in operations outside the country. The experience of conducted combat operations clearly indicated that there are significant deficiencies in the knowledge of the issues of stress management in combat conditions. In addition, practical classes in the field of combat stress and its impact on the functioning of soldiers during the execution of combat tasks, including what is of particular interest to graduates of military academies, the importance of the impact of the combat and operational environment on the effectiveness of command and safety of directing military units, were basically not implemented at all. The analysis of training programs of courses preparing military contingents for the implementation of tasks within military contingents indicated a rudimentary treatment of the topic of stress and focused only on familiarization with the problem, and many times it was implemented in a way that prevented the participation of the entire state of the contingent that went on a mission.

For the authors of the future project, which later became IMLA, it became clear that the need to gather in one place comprehensive knowledge of both scientific and practical ways of coping with stress among the military community is not an alternative today, but a necessity. Of particular importance, of course, was the creation of such a program and the implementation of such a course in which the participants would acquire actual skills in dealing with stress.

As a very important part of the military education process conducted at the Polish Military Academy of Land Forces are qualification and training courses for junior officers of the Polish Armed Forces, the initial idea of organizing such a course at the stage of academic training for cadets was widely consulted with tactical level commanders experienced in performing tasks in peacekeeping and stability operations who are trained during courses for junior officers. Conclusions from these analyses clearly indicated a strong need to acquire such knowledge already at the

stage of military studies before promotion to the first officer rank, because already during the first term platoon commanders, deputy company commanders, and battalion staff section officers, were forced to cope with the problems of stress management, motivation, leadership in crisis situations or contact with the media during the implementation of training tasks, but especially during military contingents abroad.

From the very beginning, the concept of the module included a two-level approach to the problem of forming and developing competencies in coping with stress. The first level was to include individual knowledge and skills, the aim of which was primarily to build awareness of the problem and its impact on the functioning of soldiers on the modern battlefield in the context of combat stress. Subsequently, the assumptions of the concept were focused on building the knowledge and skills of commanding a military unit in high-stress combat conditions, in addition to the ability to conduct training and build the ability to cope with stress among subordinate soldiers. This approach was motivated by the methodological justification of the implementation of the training process in the future course covering:

- To become familiar with the problem and gain basic background knowledge;
- To present the problem in the context of the military environment;
- To get acquainted with the area of knowledge and practice based on the experience of contemporary armed conflicts;
- To present proposals of solutions to the problem in the context of knowledge and skills of an individual soldier;
- To present proposals of solutions to the problem in the context of knowledge and skills of a military commander;
- To present proposals of solutions to the problem in the context of knowledge and skills necessary in command practice.

The above methodology allowed the development of the initial concept of the course and specific module, which thus became a coherent and complementary model. The coherence of this model was based on the compatibility of general content and coming from the civilian environment with what science and military practice managed to work out so far as the experience of social research realized on the basis of preparation of military units for subsequent military operations as well as

referring to the combat experience obtained in this regard. As has already been mentioned the personal experience of the authors of the project gained in missions outside the country played a significant role here. However, complementarity was intended to be achieved from the beginning by including foreign partners in the project, thus creating strong teams of professionals equipped with both theoretical knowledge and proven practice. Of no small importance here was also the technical equipment and infrastructure allowing for the implementation of the practical part on both a high substantive and practical level.

From the very beginning, the authors of the course considered the added value of the idea of creating an international leadership school to be inspiring others to develop further concepts of cooperation and building multinational teams focused on military education of future adepts of the art of command. And also presents and educates the young generation of European army officers on the possibilities of cooperation of various partners from different countries in the implementation of a joint project. After all, sustainable and effective cooperation of the European community in the field of common security policy depends precisely on the young generation. Thus, the idea of creating IMLA was accompanied by the motive of educating and developing the experience of cooperation with foreign partners, changing the mentality or developing it towards greater openness to building multinational teams based on common European values.

Another inspiration for the course was the peace support operations courses dedicated to U.S. cadets delivered under the CULP¹² program. Due to an emerging need for retraining a change in course content is more focused on the area of leadership. The experience gained during these courses inspired us to organize such a course in an extended version with partners within the framework of Erasmus+, who by enriching their potential with specialized knowledge and experience in other relevant leadership areas, could become an excellent complement to the workshop of international courses realized by AWL. The aforementioned experiences in developing and improving the leadership competencies of our university's European partners and U.S. cadets interested the participants of the International Military Academic Forum, during which the initial inspirations of AWL officers gained resonance among other military academic centers in Europe.

¹² CULP – Culture Understanding and Language Proficiency Program.

From the very beginning, when analyzing the envisaged objectives of the IMLA course, the authors identified the essential elements of intellectual outputs that should be developed in order for the course to have a solid scientific basis, a knowledge base, both traditional and interactive, and above all, a practical dimension to the course verifying the acquired knowledge, learning and developing specific skills. At the stage of conception, we will stop at these general assumptions, so that during the phase of establishing cooperation with foreign partners who decide to join the project all the details concerning the intellectual results will be settled.

The networking phase

After the presentation of the initial concept of the IMLA course, which, as mentioned above, took place during the IMAF university forum, the proposal of creating a project within the framework of strategic partnership found its acceptance among the representatives of the Academia Militar in Lisbon and the Hellenic Army Academy in Athens. During the initial discussions, the Portuguese partners proposed social communication and the Greeks' crisis management, while our side proposed a module related to motivation and stress management. After preliminary team analysis, each team elaborated its vision of realization of particular modules taking into account first of all their own capabilities in the context of possessed knowledge and experience, didactic equipment and infrastructure, as well as real needs to supplement the desired competence resources among military cadets of universities.

Considering the fact that the subjects of the IMLA leadership courses are cadets from different universities, as well as the greater possibility of dissemination of electronic and online materials, e-book and e-learning studies were chosen as essential elements of knowledge acquisition by future IMLA course participants. Having also experience gained during the first strategic partnership project named: *Creating international semester regarding military education needs for future officers in Europe* it was noticed that materials delivered in such a form make it very easy to conduct training by the asynchronous method because it does not require immediate communication and information flow in real-time as in the case of synchronous training, the participant can access the training materials at any time convenient for him.

Of course, the greatest value from the beginning of the conception and what was confirmed during the first meetings in the framework of establishing cooperation

between Polish, Greek, and Portuguese academies, was the practical part of the course realized in individual universities according to the declared areas of training modules. Therefore, during the first project meetings, discussions concerned the scope of planned training and proper development of the course curricula, so that they would both serve for the realization of the practical part of the IMLA project and be ready materials to be used by others interested in conducting such courses in other European military academies.

In order to achieve this goal, a general structure was created for the individual intellectual outputs of the project team. Thus, for the e-book, the requirements were defined, which included the creation of four periodicals in the form of a guide for students grouped according to the idea of methodical introduction of readers to the given subject area into individual chapters and subchapters. A very important element of each book was to be a list of widely available literature, i.e. in English, which was an interesting challenge for the authors of the project. It is much easier to prepare a bibliography for a monolingual team of students on the basis of their own publications, while it is much more difficult to find and propose sophisticated content, especially concerning the military context, to the international community. However, as the analysis of the subject literature showed, many contents containing similar information can be found in the English literature and it was possible to find them, which contributed to the knowledge of the authors themselves. In addition, the exploratory nature of the work of the project creators created opportunities to establish further contacts with other educational and training institutions, which is another element of added value.

Another tool used in the education of IMLA students was the e-learning materials. Their structure and content were, of course, adapted to the scope of knowledge presented in the e-books and aimed at the practical dimension of the courses, so that they were a smooth transition from theory to practice. The principle was adopted that the presented information will be presented starting from general content to specific and civilian environments and only then shown in the military context. A special form of education extending the e-learning offer was the idea of posting links to training videos using the rich resources of Internet services. The content and visualizations contained therein were to prepare future course

participants for the practical part of the courses as well as to familiarize and teach those skills that could not be done practically due to the limited course time.

Module description is an elaboration structured in such a way as to enable preparation and detailed realization of individual thematic modules. Therefore, its structure includes the following groups of information:

- Minimum requirements for lecturers-instructors – specifying what expertise a course leader should have, practical experience, level of English language proficiency, and type of social competence in leadership;
- Learning objectives for the module;
- Learning outcomes divided into knowledge, skills, and competences, which are assumed to be achieved while completing the module within the course;
- Means of verifying the achievement of educational results, which include: observations, tests, and questionnaires;
- Detailed list of topics and issues covered in the course, with division into hours and an indication of training forms;
- Recommended basic and additional literature;
- Divide the issues developed in each intellectual output i.e. e-book and eLearning into different phases, module description, e-book, e-learning course, short mobility for students and teachers, participation in the intensive program.

Activity during the program development phase

The phase of developing the specific programs for the IMLA course was a major authoring effort and required a number of individual and team activities within the sub-teams responsible for each module as well as all members of the IMLA community project team. Within the organized activities undertaken by the author team, the following undertakings can be highlighted during the development of the workshop program:

- Development of issues concerning the theoretical basis of the module;

- Elaboration of issues concerning practical skills;
- Analysis and selection of teaching methods in accordance with specified objectives;
- Analysis and selection of issues to be addressed during workshops;
- Developing the scenario of exercises related to the subject of the module;
- Developing the scenario of exercises in the scope of the module topics with the use of simulation systems;
- Development of a post-course competency development test;
- Development of intensive course program.

The main determinant and criterion for the selection of individual thematic areas and detailed issues to be implemented during the workshops within IMLA were the assumed educational objectives of the course in a given module on the basis of which individual thematic blocks were created. Moreover, an important influence on the selection of the educational content was the infrastructure of the didactic base of particular military academies participating in the project. The choice of the form of classes, in turn, was additionally influenced, although it would be more accurate to say inspired, by the specialized instrumentation used in the basic educational process at universities, which may include: simulation systems, socialist training centers (horseback riding center, physical training center), comprehensively equipped laboratories (television recording studio).

A great help in the verification of the planned thematic areas and the technical security used during their realization were project team meetings realized each time in another of the three partner military academies. During official meetings of the team as well as during informal meetings the exchange of mutual ideas and views on the content of individual modules helped to objectively assess them at the stage of designing and substantive development of practical workshop programs. The scope of joint work during project team meetings included, but was not limited to, the following issues: requirements for e-books and e-learning courses, proposals for the thematic content of the theoretical and practical parts of the workshops, the method of evaluation of the learning outcomes achieved during the workshops, the method of

searching for source and supporting materials, the use of experience from command practice and the implementation of curricular activities within the curriculum.

Permanent changes in mentality, behavior, and, as a result, in the whole organizational culture of the armed forces can be made only when, in addition to words and declarations, the reality will be influenced by the real attitudes of leaders. As the authors of the project and course programs, we were aware that one of the main goals of the course is to have a permanent influence on the future candidates for command positions who will be the participants of our course. Therefore, when analyzing the program content, both theoretical and practical, we took into account the strength of their real impact on changing even the way of thinking of future course graduates. This approach was the main strategy for developing the programs of workshops conducted during IMLA. Another important guideline, to which the process of creating the programs of individual workshops was subordinated, was the achievement of the effect of inspiration. Apart from acquiring and developing further leadership competencies, it is important to inspire students to a constant process of self-development, and what is more, to teach them to inspire others, to introduce them to the canon of priority leadership behaviors. That is why thematic areas contained a lot of detailed issues and concrete practical solutions, but they were also supposed to be a motivating element for further work, own search, and discovering the next resources of command potential. Thus, understanding and deeply identifying with the values that are important from the point of view of a commander-leader was an important criterion in the construction of IMLA course plans and programs. Inspiring people means showing them the goal and therefore an important element of developing programs was referring to the basic goals that officers and commanders face starting from their first duty stations. Thus, it was assumed that regardless of the thematic area of the module, the workshop program should be constructed in such a way as to include the following elements:

- Expand awareness and understanding of one's role in the subunit;
- Build knowledge of the possible behaviors of subordinates and the associated challenges when commanding a unit;
- Develop leadership and command skills, independence in making decisions and acting in difficult situations, initiative, mental toughness, and creative thinking;

- Indicating alternative ways and methods of solving problems in a given area;
- Getting acquainted with possibilities of independent searching for solutions in a given area, acquiring knowledge, building a database, searching for mentoring, etc.;
- Analyzing and diagnosing the situation in the team and choosing the way of solving the problem;
- Developing a sense of joint responsibility for the development of subordinates.

In the community of people responsible for management education, it is a truism to repeat that in order to achieve the goal of knitting there is a need for proper planning and programming of future action. Nevertheless, this is often forgotten. Constantly referring to the goal and correcting the training program if even one of the elements indicates the danger of losing the possibility of achieving one of the goals is an important element that must still be realized and with which the writing of the program, especially of a course like IMLA must end. The international environment and the several locations in which the various stages of the project are conducted require the creation of coherent programs that address the objectives in each part.

Implementation phase

In the course of the IMLA project, three main training events were implemented: workshops for instructors, workshops for cadets based on the individual module curricula, and an intensive course covering all modules during which cadets previously participated in the module course acted as instructors. After each of these events, the accuracy and validity of the selection of content and forms of education were verified. Discussions with the authoring team, other teachers, and observing instructors were undertaken for this purpose. During the workshop for instructors, the authors of the curricula for individual modules had the opportunity to exchange views on the proposed contents and forms of training during the courses planned to be carried out on the basis of the prepared training plans. Thanks to such meetings and work on ready-to-implement module programs there was a possibility to specify some issues and improve methods of teaching. In particular, many critical

comments on the preparation of practical classes helped to better adapt the nature of the classes:

- Changing certain aspects of the planned context of lesson scenarios;
- Adjusting the level of difficulty of the tasks performed by cadets to the level of subject matter knowledge in the military field;
- Adapting the lesson plans for more general application due to the different military specialties at each partner university;
- Incorporating more subtle cultural elements into the problems cadets solve during the course;
- Expanding some topics to include time for creating opportunities for cadets to take initiative and develop proactive leadership attitudes;
- Indicating better emphasis in the course topics on European values for a smoother dissemination among the future generation of officers;
- Creating alternative scenarios in the event of a problem with contextual understanding by particular groups of cadets;
- Paying attention to small details of the form, certain scenario episodes or used didactic tools to increase the satisfaction of the training and reduce the sometimes necessary monotony of the classes.

In conclusion, it can be said that the workshops with inductors have become an effective tool for improving the substantive and practical content of classes planned within the IMLA project of courses. In spite of some established formal curricular frameworks of individual modules, after such objective verification by other partners, IMLA programs do not have a rigidly formalized form. The specified basic topics, issues, and tasks constitute only certain frameworks and boundary conditions which are intended to organize the course of the subsequent courses and thus increase its universality and effectiveness. Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of such events can become a standard for other international undertakings by effectively helping to develop a general course plan, stimulating the search for universal solutions, supporting the implementation of difficult issues with their knowledge and experience, and assisting in the preparation of the evaluation and carrying it out.

Thanks to the instructor workshops, the course authors were more sensitive to observation during the first part of the IMLA course for cadets implemented according to the curricula of each module. Thanks to the suggestions of the Greek and Portuguese university partners during the course, the instructors adopted more of a mentoring attitude than a teaching one. Thus, the mentees during the course had the opportunity to enhance their technical, interpersonal, and leadership skills through a mentoring relationship. This type of course delivery helped the mentees identify their own capabilities and prepare to move to the next level of development and training that best fit their needs and interests. The more collaborative relationship between instructors and students increased the effectiveness of the training because instead of students wandering off on their own, which sometimes would not have been intentional, instructors helped mentees develop issues or strategies for solving problems related to the implementation of program topics.

The selection and detailed elaboration of topics and the manner of their implementation during the intensive course, which was the most challenging due to the preparation to implement some of the issues for cadets as instructors, was based on ensuring a good understanding of the purpose of the classes, not imposing but inspiring to independently select the final form of the activities. The adoption of an inspirational attitude by the instructors resulted in a deeper understanding of the idea of implementing specific topics and particular guesses, as well as taking joint responsibility for the achievement of learning outcomes. This way of cadets' involvement was at the same time another element of shaping and developing leadership competencies as the main goal of the implemented courses. The experience of implementing courses with cadets has identified specific issues and forms of education to build confidence in them and provide encouragement to grow beyond routine opportunities. In addition, the introduction to the commander's mindset contributed to a better understanding of one's future mission in the structure of the armed forces and what is needed to fulfill it through one's own service and contributing to the development of subordinates' competencies. From the above it can therefore be concluded that the critical open thinking during the implementation of the main part of the project which was the IMLA courses provided an opportunity:

- To improve the skills of instructors;
- To change the content of individual topics to make them more universal;

- To adjust issues to broaden horizons through the ability to perform more demanding tasks, testing and expanding cadets' own capabilities;
- To increase self-awareness through honest feedback;
- to create opportunities for students to also be a source of feedback and good ideas;
- To contribute to the growth of intrinsic motivation and satisfaction with the candidate service by obtaining higher rates of development and educational results;
- To reflect on and review one's own teaching achievements through a partnership with cadets despite the implementation of training issues at other levels of responsibility;
- To use an open line of communication between the staff involved in the learning and evaluation process and the cadets.

The evaluation phase

The evaluation phase of the intellectual results of the project can be divided into three phases: the evaluation phase of the instructors during the intensive course, the evaluation phase of the courses by the students, and the post-project evaluation phase. A holistic view of all phases of the project implementation allowed:

- To gain a consistent understanding of the necessary design work for this type of course;
- To identify principles for organizing cooperation in the development of the necessary materials for the implementation of the course;
- To identify criteria for a smooth transition from the conceptual phase of the project to the phase of practical development of planning and implementation documents;
- To grasp the final seminal context of the implementation of modules with different topics focused in the area of leadership;
- To define the boundary conditions for the successful implementation of an educational project in an international environment;

- To build a knowledge base that, on the one hand, captures the broad context of the project's main theme and, at the same time, precisely helps to generate concrete solutions in specialized areas.

Summarizing the obtained evaluations from the instructors' evaluations, the surveys of cadets' assessments of the degree of usefulness of the attractiveness of the course, and the own conclusions of the program authors and project team members, it can be concluded that the factors determining the success of the IMLA project were:

- Engaging the project as part of the development of base and leadership competencies of university faculty with academic and command experience;
- Orientation of the course programs to inspire proactive, responsible and determined attitudes to achieve the set goals;
- Promoting and developing habits of improvement and self-development among future commanders as a tool to support the command process;
- Introduction at an early stage of leadership competence development of methods developing a sense of shared responsibility for the development of subordinates;
- Supporting the development of interpersonal relations through contacts between soldiers of the armies of other European Union countries;
- Improving key leadership competencies as an element of the whole organizational culture of the armed forces.

Establishing close cooperation with foreign project partners based on a partnership relationship requiring emotional openness on both sides has contributed to the willingness to think critically about the quality of one's work, to try new methods, or to continue the effort of overcoming encountered difficulties in project implementation. Thus, building international project teams seems to be one of the best strategies for developing the intellectual potential of research and teaching staff. An important condition for effective cooperation in such a team focused not only on organizational matters but also on the development of intellectual results is a proactive attitude resulting in above-average commitment as well as mutual respect

and understanding of the differences in cultural, structural, legal, and procedural conditions of partners from other countries.

Tomasz Smal

An implementation of the new content developed in the frame of strategic partnership programs into the existing educational programs for cadets/civilian students

Abstract

When starting the preparation of any educational project, it is essential to consider the need and usefulness of the results obtained in the frame of this project. Therefore, appropriate planning for implementing the obtained project results in the organization's educational programs (Academy) is crucial. Each organization/academy has its framework, legal restrictions, and the so-called good practices and functions in broader determinants related to the local and global environment. It is also subject to different legal conditions and regulations.

Using a case study, which was the execution and effective implementation of the results of projects implemented under the Strategic Partnership Program (SPP) of Key Action 2 of the Erasmus+ Programme, this chapter will present the best practices in terms of planning, adaptation, and implementation of the obtained project results to real educational programs at the Military University of Land Forces in Wrocław.

Introduction

In the course of career development, an officer holds various positions. Therefore, graduates from military Academies should have a developed range of competencies that will meet the requirements concerning service in the country and abroad. Therefore, military academies should emphasize improving the simulation systems of educating future commanders through permanent modification of education programs, emphasizing improving competencies in a real professional environment.

The quality of a good commander-leader is proved by his ability to correctly perceive challenges and have the appropriate intellectual potential and experience to

take effective actions. It seems that the training of just such officers should be one of the primary tasks of modern military education systems in EU countries.

Based on the analysis of current security conditions and the requirements for the functioning of the armed forces, one can state that constant improvement of the educational offer of military Academies should focus on issues such as:

- Building leadership skills;
- Improving creativity and innovation in solving tasks;
- Searching, verification, and critical analysis of information sources;
- Shaping technological competencies concerning the weapon systems used;
- Creating effective cooperation in an international environment.

On the other hand, concerning the implementation of new educational content among many military Academies, difficulties were identified. Firstly, they were caused mainly by the limited mobility of military students. These students carry out much more extensive programs because they are rich in practical classes that prevent them from being mobile for a more extended period. Moreover, the military systems of individual countries differ so much that it is troublesome to ensure recognition of the effects achieved abroad. The author's experience to date shows that military universities show little flexibility in recognizing skills acquired in another country, especially in specialist subjects, resulting from the standards of ministries responsible for national defense. These experiences come from a period when military students were sent to study abroad under the Erasmus program, and after their return, they had to refill in knowledge from numerous military subjects.

Therefore, the launch of the IMLA SPP was the first step toward ensuring the recognition and greater mobility of military students. This project aimed to expand the offer of joint classes dedicated to military students and develop a systematic system of developing common educational content among European military universities.

To sum up, it can be assumed that the implementation of the project described in this chapter significantly improved the quality of the education process of future officers, directly matching not only the needs of the national armed forces but also the common security of the EU.

Reasons for modification of educational programs

The growing requirements for the preparation of officers for cooperation in the international environment determine the need to monitor and modify the education provided to them constantly. The EU security strategy (Figure 1) identifies the following security priorities:

- Ensuring that EU security policy reflects changes in security threats in Europe;
- Building long-term sustainable resilience;
- Involving EU institutions and agencies, governments, the private sector, and individuals in a whole-society approach;
- A combination of multiple policy areas with direct security implications.

It is also necessary that the armed forces consider the above-mentioned priorities in terms of the security of the EU in their official activities while carrying out their tasks.



Fig. 1. The EU Security Union Strategy

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/european-security-union_pl (27.06.2021)

Another issue is our experience from contemporary armed conflicts, indicating the need to replace traditional commanders with "commanders-leaders." Only such commanders will be able to actively adapt and create their methods of operation to the surrounding reality. The basis of such an understanding of leadership will be specialist skills, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence. According to these experiences, modern commanders should communicate effectively, negotiate, be able to influence others, motivate subordinates, recognize their emotions, and have the ability to control them. It is also crucial to understand that the skills mentioned above do not have to be innate. They can be successfully shaped and improved in the education process. Hence the decision to implement and execute SPP.

During the implementation of the SPP, namely the Creating international semester regarding military education needs for future officers in Europe; as well as the International Military Leadership Academy (IMLA), it has proved to be an excellent complement to study programs, emphasizing practical methods of acquiring and improving leadership skills in an international setting. By design, their goals were:

- Promoting belonging to the EU security system by developing European citizenship, identifying with EU values, and strengthening active participation and shared responsibility for the EU security system;
- Strengthening the competencies of future officers in commanding international teams by enabling them to participate in transnational events, i.e., workshops and field simulation exercises;
- Enhancing students' leadership competencies and emotional intelligence, with particular emphasis on communication skills in an international environment, stress management, crisis management, and motivation and influencing others;
- Building a platform for understanding and cooperation, expanding the network of contacts through mobility and intercultural dialogue, and cooperation presenting the culture and history of each partner country;
- Increasing communication skills, emphasizing efficient use of the language, and participating in the project in future officers.

It must also be added that the development and implementation of the adopted forms of education were adjusted to the expectations of NATO officers. They were formulated in the publication entitled "Generic Officer Professional Military Education - Reference Curriculum," which was developed by over 20 representatives of NATO military universities and was created as part of the project entitled "Generic Officer PME Reference Curriculum Project Team.

The aim of the projects implemented under the SPP was also to include in the developed educational content as many elements as possible standard to future EU officers as possible. Therefore, individual modules created for the project were assessed by members of the Implementation Group, and the status of "common module" was obtained for all of them. Thanks to this, all military academies in Europe are interested in implementing the described modules into the didactic offer, to ensure the free flow of students between military higher education institutions in Europe. Academies can implement these modules in their educational offer as an alternative training offer or as part of the education programs at the studies implemented there, especially in management and/or leadership.

Legal and organizational conditionings

The selection of partners to SPP was not accidental. They were chosen based on complementing each other with the desired competencies. Each of the Academies participating in the project specialized in selected areas. It was possible to exchange best practices and jointly create and implement comprehensive programs for educating leaders prepared to carry out tasks at the international level.

In addition, partnerships within the projects were created by Academies that previously cooperated under the Erasmus Program (Erasmus+ Programme), implementing the mobility of staff and students, but also co-created the International Military Academic Forum - IMAF. The aim of the above-mentioned Forum is, inter alia, undertaking activities aimed at creating joint education of future EU officers. In addition, some of the universities included in the SPP previously cooperated with each other in the area of other educational projects. In addition to the history of cooperation connecting Partners and common goals, partner groups were also created based on the specificity of individual Academies. The unique contribution of the Partnership is primarily the "strengths" that distinguish each of the Partners.

Hence, the synergy effect of the Partnership and complementarity in terms of knowledge, experience, and competencies were achieved.

However, each of the universities participating in the project had different legal and organizational conditions for implementing new educational content. It was a great challenge, especially in the first phase of project implementation. It also required a large number of arrangements within the university and between university - partners. Therefore, all planned activities were preceded by detailed arrangements by e-mail and telephone with Partners. As a result, universities ensured a parallel implementation of project activities following internal procedures.

To better illustrate the legal and organizational conditions of the time in the implementation of the new educational content developed under the SPP, an opinion was collected among people responsible for the substantive implementation of these projects at their universities. The question which was given to them: *"Was the Academy, which you represented, relatively open to the implementation of a new educational content resulting from the SPP tasks, or on the contrary, was it necessary to negotiate longer and convince the authorities about the rightness/necessity of applying this content into education?"* The obtained answers show that each of the universities had a different attitude to implementing projects and implementing the developed educational content.

On the one hand, the good attitude was noticed in the Theresian Military Academy, where its representative wrote that *"... it was not a problem since the TMA-representatives had freedom of movement. Anyway the national curriculum was to be up-dated; therefore, it was easy to integrate the SPP-modules"*.

A quite similar situation was noticed at the University of Defence in Brno (Czech Republic), their representative wrote that *"environment inside Faculty of Military Leadership was positive – open to implementation of SPP outcomes. However, there were some troubles in implementation, as (...) a serious complication represented a changeover within the national (nation-wide) accreditation procedures, defining new standards for accreditations of degree programs in individual areas incl. security branches. These new standards, along with specific national military requirements (incl. e.g. a continuous 5-years master's degree programs for education of future officers) meant a serious challenge when designing current curricula at the UoD."*

According to a representative of the Military Academy in Portugal " *it was open to the possibility of having the educational contents taught at the institution on a modular basis, not necessarily integrated into the regular syllabus of the courses. Courses are planned and designed in a very strict way (in the sense that we do not have optional subjects, for instance), so the rightness of having new contents integrated does not necessarily correspond to the needs of the institution in formal terms*".

On the contrary, a Polish representative said that the general Tadeusz Kościuszko University of Land Forces was not very open. He wrote that " *despite the fact we were leaders of four international projects, I would describe my former institution as a little open to new content developed with international partners. There are many factors that shaped this situation: institutional, specific-person-oriented, stereotypes, and poor leadership of the institution authorities. They were all bottom-up initiatives. Periodically the project teams were strongly supported by mid- and top-level leadership, but I would not call it full support and openness of the institution for such initiatives. Each initiative required many negotiations to convince the authorities, even for the beneficial and minor item*".

From these two statements, it can be inferred that the attitude of individual academies and formal determinants to implementing new educational content within SPP was not always open and positive. Thus the implementation of projects could also be complex, and it required many organizational efforts and patience as far as contractors are concerned.

The last element of conditions mentioned here is the transfer of information to the public and potential stakeholders of the project. Namely, EU representatives like the Implementation Group, under the scope of the European Security and Defence College, which is responsible for taking initiatives aimed at standardizing education and training programs dedicated to military students and junior officers; academies' Authorities, departmental and local government authorities, students and teachers, other partner universities (including civilian) about receiving funding and the planned start of the project.

Information about the project was also disseminated to the media, where the projects, their goals, and expected results were promoted (e.g., websites, social media, news websites, and industry portals were used).

Meetings between project partners were a vital element of the arrangements for adjusting legal and organizational issues. Thanks to the rotational organization of meetings, their participants had the opportunity to:

- Get acquainted with the specificity of the functioning of the Academy's – partners;
- Get acquainted with good practices developed by different military Academies in the field of education and training of future EU officers;
- Getting to know the cultures and customs of countries and universities participating in the projects;
- Becoming sensitive to the existing cultural differences and differences in educational systems.

Thanks to numerous meetings, each partner had a tangible impact on the course of the meetings and the issues discussed during them (no needs reported by individual project teams were omitted). The meetings, which were preceded by agreeing on the agendas, were attended by several representatives from each partner university. These were the people who made up the Project Team, i.e., the project manager, financial specialist, and 2-4 academic experts, depending on the Academy. Each meeting ended with writing down the minutes of the arrangements made and setting out a work plan for the period until the next meeting. Protocols were written by the project managers and then approved, being an integral part of the project documentation (thanks to which certainty was obtained in implementing activities on which a joint decision was made and a consensus was reached on how to implement them). The minutes were a point of reference at subsequent meetings (verification of the obligations of each academy along with the work progress work).

Planning and implementation of new content in the education process

It should be emphasized that each of the Academies included in the SPP has and systematically develops its education quality assurance systems, under which it supports and monitors activities for the systematic improvement of quality. Despite this, to achieve the best results, universities involved in its implementation (as observers, evaluators, and advisers) are specialists who form the systems mentioned above. At each academy, as part of the activities related to monitoring and evaluating the quality of activities and project results, the coordinators were provided with

substantive support by the Academy's plenipotentiaries for the quality of education and curricula.

In addition, taking into account the reliable implementation of all project activities and concern for the high quality of results, the Partnership specified in detail the method of selecting not only the administrative staff involved in the implementation of the project (people with knowledge of creating modules and content of education dedicated to military students, people familiar with the specificity of military education programs) but also the staff involved in developing the results of intellectual work. Worth mentioning that each partner university is a budgetary unit of the public finance sector. They are bound by clearly defined procedures for spending public funds.

In the case of the undertaken project results, such as training module programs, didactic materials (including e-books), toolkits supporting the learning process, reviews, interview scenarios, and the project website, quantitative measurement indicators were used. The choice of such a method was dictated by the measurable nature of the results achieved. Assessment of the achievement of project objectives and results was carried out on an ongoing basis during their implementation concerning the established values included in the project schedule and budget. Only the accepted results were considered completed.

Qualitative assessment indicators were used in the case of such project results as:

- An increase in the level of competencies of students participating in the project;
- An increase in the level of competence of the teaching staff participating in the project;
- Overcoming communication barriers among students;
- Awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences of participants in the project;
- Leadership competencies among students;
- Increasing students' awareness of the attitudes, predispositions, creating contacts with subordinates and commanders.

The choice of such a method was dictated by the uncountable nature of the results achieved.

The process of assessing the development of students' competencies was verified many times during the project. It was carried out using knowledge tests and evaluation of practical exercises (at the end of individual modules) and with the use of self-assessment sheets for leadership competencies. In assessing these competencies, apart from teachers from partner universities, external instructors were invited to participate in the didactic process by the institutions forming the partnership.

In addition, the developed results of the projects were submitted in the form of training programs for verification and evaluation by the EU Implementation Group. It provided an opportunity to present and disseminate the project's results among representatives of all EU military universities.

E-books have been prepared for each training module. Since they were peer-reviewed, they were awarded ISBNs, which increased their recognition and scientific value. Additional material in the form of manuals has also been developed for the courses, e.g., "Leadership in practice." They include essential issues and valuable knowledge in the process of carrying out the classes. The small format of the publication allows them to be also used in field training conditions.

E-learning materials for combined mobility activities were also developed for each of the training workshops. The purpose was to familiarize students with the theory behind the practical workshops to equalize the level of knowledge of participants before implementing the practical part of the classes in the traditional form and consolidate their knowledge of theoretical issues, also after completion of mobility.

People who played a crucial role in developing the IMLA SPP were again asked about the method and effectiveness of implementing the developed forms of education. The question was: "Has the university, which you represented, relatively efficiently and fully implemented the educational content developed as part of the project, or were there some challenges or obstacles?"

In the Military University of Land Forces in Wrocław, "Each step on the implementation path was full of obstacles. Periodically, when the mid- and top

leadership supported the initiatives, it was easier. But it was due to the push and direct orders from the authorities, not a result of institutional openness and willingness to change when opportunities arise.

We were successful with the implementation of the outputs of the projects we conducted. However, it was because the project team members were at the mid-and top levels of the institution, that they were able to make it happen without seeking approvals or concurrence from the less willing part of authorities. Making so-called a stated facts approach."

In the case of one of the SPP projects in the Theresian Military Academy "The challenge was to implement the semester "as such" – because the pre-conditions are different. We implemented all SPP modules but not in a sequence of 1 coherent semester. The reasons were – and are – specific national requirements. In spite of that, TMA offers an international semester each year with as many common modules as possible."

In the University of Defence "The educational content resulting from the SPP has been implemented partially. The reason is that the Faculty's primary focus is on national accreditation standards and specific military requirements, as a result, aspects of internationalization and international standardization of curricula were considered as secondary. Therefore, certain changes had to be accepted. However, educational contents, incl. topics of lectures/seminars/exercises, textbooks, etc. have been implemented, although often within modified structures of (usually integrated) courses and/or in different stages of the designed 5-years master degree program."

In the Military Academy in Portugal, "We can only fully implement the educational content resulting from IMLA in terms of Common Modules, not as part of the regular syllabuses of the courses."

Monitoring and evaluation of the process of implementing new content

A communication and cooperation plan was developed, which was an integral part of the partnership agreement. The plan included, among other things, the principles of document circulation, information exchange, reporting on the progress of the implementation of activities, and monitoring of risk related to the implementation of the project. These guidelines covered the general principles of expenditure eligibility and the procedures for managing the savings appearing in the project. In

addition, the Academies maintained constant contact with each other (by phone and e-mail and in the form of teleconferences and "virtual" meetings using, for example, Skype) for current arrangements related to the project.

An essential stage in the communication scheme between the Partners was also the previously referred international project meetings, the main goal of which was the current substantive and administrative implementation of the project. The quality of the implemented activities was supervised by the Project Coordinators and the Program Council.

Monitoring and evaluating the quality of the activities performed and the results achieved were carried out based on a tool, which was the quarterly reports sent by each of the universities. The progress of work was also discussed during international project meetings. Thanks to this multi-stage evaluation, the high quality of the activities carried out was ensured, and the risk of delays that could have a significant impact on its proper implementation was minimized.

Conferences were an essential element in summarizing the various stages of design work. The conference was attended by representatives of individual partner institutions and representatives of other military universities in Poland and Europe, representatives of departmental and local authorities, and representatives of civilian academic circles.

The work results related to the development of training modules and courses were presented at the phased conferences and meetings. During the meetings, syndicates and experts were also carried out with the participation of representatives of military academies from outside the Partnership, the purpose of which was to make a final assessment of the substantive content of the programs and the presented assumptions in terms of the preparation of e-books and tools. The suggestions and comments collected during the conferences and meetings were taken into account on an ongoing basis in the materials prepared.

At the final conferences, the experiences of Partner Universities related to the implementation of projects were summarized, and the ready-made results of intellectual work were presented. For example, during the international Military Conference in 2016 (iMAF 2016), the evaluation process was conducted for the

Program of International Semester. The Scientific Committee collected the following numbers of evaluations of the program:

- No. of countries taking part in the evaluation process – 22;
- No. of institutions taking part in the evaluation process – 42;
- No. of participants taking part in evaluation – 118;
- No. of evaluation forms for the program – 24.

Figure 2 presents the answers to the selected questions from the evaluation forms of the Program of the International Semester.

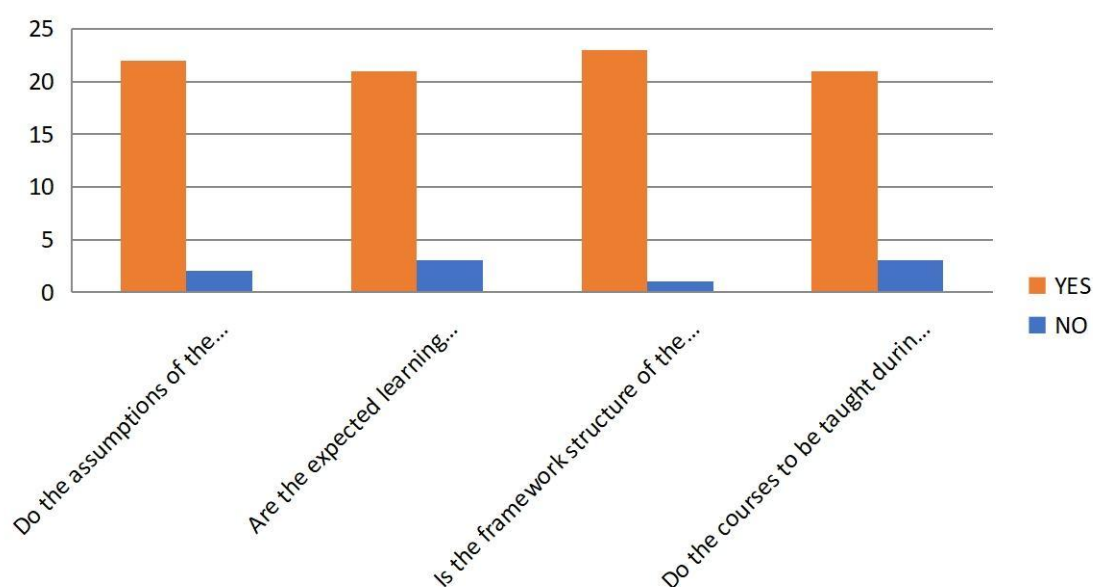


Figure 2. The numbers of positive (blue) and negative (red) answers for the selected questions from the evaluation forms of the Program of International Semester
Source: Smal T., Bielewicz M., *Outcomes of iMAF 2016 – Evaluation results of common modules and program of international semester.*

Questions were once again asked to people who had a key role in their implementation To determine to what extent individual project results were implemented and how they were monitored at individual universities. The question was: "Are you able to assess, (as long as it was monitored at your university) to what extent the educational content implemented into the program translated into an improvement in the competencies of graduates who were involved in the implementation of projects?"

In the opinion of Prof. Sofia Menezes ..." This assessment can only be done informally, by word of mouth from the students who took part in it. According to them,

it was a very rewarding experience which provided them with practical tools to better perform their tasks and duties."

According to LtCol. Marcin Bielewicz, "Each of our international projects consisted of at least a dry-run/test-phase where cadets participated. From the first such project in 2012 to 2020, I have observed that those who participated in such events of international nature presented much more developed social and communication skills. Additionally, there were exhibits of enhanced leadership skills, such as critical thinking, self-awareness, independence, timely decision-making, and responsibility (in comparison to those not participating). Therefore, it is safe to assume that they honed their skills and competencies during these events.

Of course, for such test phases we had been recruiting among those who already had good grades and language skills. They had to represent at least average academic achievements, but still, we have compared them with the rest of the cadet community, also with the top 10% of cadets (and also not participating in the international training/education events).

Col. Prof. Harald Gel wrote that "This question cannot be answered...This comparison for Cadets – who were involved in projects – simply was not done."

Col. Prof. Vladan Holcner stated that "This is very difficult to assess for the competencies of graduates as a result of a broad set of measures and circumstances. The UoD system of quality assurance does not enable detection of specific effects of the SPP on graduates' competencies. Nevertheless, the improved skills of our teaching staff, the newly designed and/or improved (internationally designed and reviewed) learning contents, and related teaching methods are to be considered as a direct contribution to the recorded increasing level of our graduate's competencies. Besides, this applies mainly to their ability to perform in an international environment, cooperate and communicate in the English language."

Conclusions and recommendations

The execution and implementation of the SPPs' results had a significant impact, which was visible both at the local and regional levels. First of all, the following should be taken into account:

- Increasing the prestige of the Academies participating in the project and strengthening the teaching potential and competitiveness of educational services' local and national market;
- Strengthening cooperation of partner Academies with local authorities responsible for the implementation of public tasks in the field of security, defense, and education;
- Building awareness of local communities about the importance of education for security;
- Stimulating interest in the issues raised in the project by ministerial authorities responsible for creating policies in the field of education, security, and defense;
- Taking up constant educational challenges by the military environment, preparing young officers for cooperation in an integrated Europe.
- Initiating similar educational activities on a larger scale or by other military universities, thanks to which the idea of unifying the education of future officers in Europe will become closer to achievement;
- Developing educational policy of institutions such as the EU or NATO, which participate in activities related to ensuring security in Europe and the world;
- Strengthening cooperation between European military Academies, including those that did not participate directly in the projects.

It should be emphasized that the addressees of the project were not only students of military studies and research and teaching staff involved in the projects, but also:

- Representatives of international institutions such as NATO, EU, OSCE, and UN;
- Representatives of defense and education ministries in individual partner countries and governmental authorities to which military academies are subject;
- Representatives of self-government and local authorities;

- Representatives of other universities who can draw from the project implementation good practices in educational solutions at the international level.

Such a wide range and a large number of potential beneficiaries of the implemented SPP made these activities a significant element in expanding the awareness of all its participants and recipients regarding the geopolitical situation, international security, and the importance and impact of education on the above.

Let me quote the words of Col. Prof. Harrauld Gell, who said: "As far as it concerns the Military Erasmus Implementation Group - no need anymore to show "good practices," since last and beginning of this year a lot of other Strategic Partnership Projects followed the example. At the moment - within the IG – there are the following projects in progress:

- International Naval Semester;
- International Air Force Semester;
- International Technical Semester;
- Military Gender Studies;
- Implementation of Digitalization in Defence Higher Education;
- International Medical Semester (no SPP – just started to develop).

These ongoing projects prove that good practices developed in the first SPPs are now successfully replicated to implement new tasks.

In summary, during the implementation of the project, many exciting and desired results were achieved, including:

- New forms of cooperation were initiated between partner Academies in the area of creating joint education programs;
- The scale of mobility between partner universities in the field of teacher and student exchange was increased;
- Communication barriers were broken among students while performing tasks in English;
- Awareness of national cultures was expanded among project participants;

- Interest in the issues of projects was aroused among universities outside the partnership;
- Exchange of experiences between universities in the field of didactic work was carried out;
- Ready-made leadership skills training programs for military students in EU countries were created;
- A cooperation network was created on the shaping and strengthening of leadership skills in the EU;
- New methods and forms of teaching were introduced (using combined mobility);
- Mutual understanding between partner countries has been improved (including the functioning of cultural differences and the specificity of shaping leadership skills at a given university);
- Cooperation between military academies was strengthened in the field of student exchange and implementation of educational projects.

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Interviews with SPP coordinators:

- Col. Prof. Harald Gel, Chairman of the UE Military Erasmus (EMILYO) Implementation Group, Head of International Office, Theresian Military Academy in Austria.
- Col. Prof. Vladan Holcner, Ph.D., former Dean of Faculty of Leadership of the University of Defence in the Czech Republic.
- Assist. Prof. Sofia Menezes, Regent of the English Curriculum Units and Erasmus+ Coordinator. Military Academy in Portugal.
- LtCol. Dr Marcin Bielewicz, former Vice Dean of Faculty of Management of the gen. Tadeusz Kosciuszko Military University of Land Forces in Wrocław, Poland.

Nikolaos Karadimas

E-learning as the tool of delivery of IMLA content

Abstract

The 21st century is characterized as an age of rapid technological developments which have caused fundamental changes in the fields of economics, labor, research, culture, education, and daily life. According to education, Information and Communication Technologies have brought fundamental changes in educational objectives, methodologies, tools, and teaching and learning strategies. E-learning is an innovative approach to teaching and learning that advances rapidly and is being adopted and implemented by an increasingly great number of educational institutions.

The basic aim of this chapter is to reach out to the main definitions of e-learning. It intends to highlight that the researchers, through an extensive review of the literature, cannot adopt a single e-learning definition, and therefore e-learning has been divided into four major perspectives; the pedagogical, communicational, technological, and holistic one as well as into four dimensions; synchronicity, space, independence, and operation mode.

Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning are presented and the most important pedagogical learning theories, which are useful for evaluating the pedagogical outcomes and the e-learning system in total are described. Finally, the asynchronous e-learning platform Moodle, which has been used for supporting International Military Leadership Academy (IMLA) project, is presented describing its features, structure, and use.

Introduction

Nowadays there is rapid evolution and development in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), networks, and computers, which significantly has contributed to the development of the educational process. Initially, the new means that technology offered in the educational field, such as projector, improved the understanding of the content of a course in the traditional way of teaching (face-to-face). Later, the technology was extended to the creation of a new teaching tool called e-learning, through which it is possible to implement current educational approaches and methods of e-learning.

Modern audiovisual elements are used during its application, e.g. images, figures, videos, diagrams, sounds, which give interactivity and establish it as a powerful and promising means of education. The e-learning platforms or otherwise the Learning Management Systems (LMS) are the communication means between instructors and students and these platforms easily arrange and manage the educational material to be accessible to users.

In the past, there was a type of elementary distance learning, by post mail, but the time delay in communication between the participants was creating additional problems and was making the whole educational process very difficult. Today, this problem has been eliminated, as state-of-the-art information systems and new technologies offer opportunities and abilities for excellent two-way communication. At the same time, instructors can send through a network infinite digital information that is easier to understand for students, as well as to use other means of communication, such as interactive TV, or voice and video conferencing over the Internet, etc.

The term "e-learning" means any education that uses the sources and capabilities of the Internet and computers. Therefore, it is a wide range that initially extends from the simple use of e-mail as a means of enhancing traditional teaching, then to the existence of hybrid courses where the instructor combines elements of Tele-education with those of traditional one to replace some of the lectures in the classroom with virtual lectures, to the complete distance learning. As expected, the integration of new technologies into the educational process has led to the creation of more and more platforms with different criteria and features to meet the different and specific needs of educational organizations and institutions that wish to use the corresponding platform.

Regardless of this specific purpose, the general purpose remains the possibility of access to all levels of education for those who cannot easily participate in traditional education because of their distant place of residence, a busy schedule, and other commitments or even organic-biological needs. Furthermore, there are remote areas that cannot easily be accessed by instructors because of poor transportation, personal reasons, or even because of the distance that makes the transportation too costly, and therefore transportation is unprofitable and cannot be done.

It cannot be ignored that the shift from traditional to distance learning through Learning Management Systems (LMS) has been spread to hundreds of institutions around the world and continues to spread at an increasing rate first in higher education institutions (universities, military academies, institutions, colleges, etc.) and then in secondary and high schools and primary schools and kindergartens. The pace of development and dissemination of e-learning is according to the available ability at each age to meet the requirements of these technologies and the use of specially designed software for the specific needs of younger people and generally disabled people. In this way, lifelong learning is achieved by anyone, anywhere and anytime, with the aim of the unceasing progress of learning through academic education and the development of professions due to the educational training and evolution offered by access to knowledge through the method of e-learning.

According to Allen, Seaman, Poulin, and Straut (2016), a program can be characterized as a distance learning program when at least 80% of the program material is delivered via an Internet connection. In the bibliography, electronic learning is aptly attributed to the term e-learning. More careful consideration of the term makes it clear that "e" refers to the word "electronic" and the transmission channel of the educational content indicating the electronic mode of transmission. According to Rahmani and Azimi (2013), "e" should refer to the words "everything, everyone, engaging, easy" possibly to denote universality, participation, and easiness with which anyone can share knowledge through e-learning systems. The hyphen "-" is related to the transfer content that is also the object of learning and the last part of the term, "learning", reflects the real activity of an individual, which is "learning".

What is e-Learning? Clarifications of Definitions

This section attempts to answer the question "what is e-learning?", which certainly cannot be answered with a simple definition. The fact is that different definitions have been used to define e-learning that takes place online on the internet, which makes it difficult to finally develop a general definition. Researchers agree that a single definition for e-learning has not yet been found. Definitions that are usually used for online learning are e-learning. Internet learning, distributed learning, networked learning, telelearning, telematics, distributed learning, virtual learning, computer-assisted learning, Web-based learning, and distance learning. The

definition should include material distribution over the Internet, Intranet, Extranet, satellite broadcast, audio-video film, interactive television, and CD-ROM.

Different terminologies declare the conception of a similar educational experience. They also state that the student is at a distance from the instructor, the student uses some form of technology (usually a computer) to access the educational material, the student uses the technology to interact with the instructor and other students, and at the end, some form of support is provided to the students (Oye, Salleh, & Iahad, 2012).

Many researchers have tried to define e-learning, however, through thorough research in the bibliography the definitions of e-learning could be divided into four major perspectives which means the point of view from which a researcher defines what e-learning is. Therefore, this section does not present just a definition of e-learning but it tries to cover these four perspectives: the pedagogical, communicational, technological, and holistic ones.

The Four Perspectives

First of all, there are definitions for e-learning in the light of its *pedagogical* perspective, which is a more student-centered dimension, claiming that it supports student-centered learning approaches and knowledge exchange among students from all over the world. These definitions introduce the idea that e-learning should serve the purposes of pedagogy for student benefit. Student-centered learning puts students' interests first, acknowledging student voice as central to the learning experience. In a student-centered learning space, students choose what they learn, how they pace their learning, and how they assess their learning by playing the role of the facilitator of the classroom.

This is in contrast to traditional education, also called teacher-centered learning, which situates the instructor as the mainly "active" role while students take a more "passive", receptive role. In a teacher-centered classroom, instructors choose what the students learn, how the students learn, and the way the students assessed their learning. In contrast, student-centered learning requires students to be active, responsible participants in their own learning and at their own pace of learning (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2010; Johnson, 2013).

In this sense, an innovative approach is provided for the delivery of a well-designed student-centered, interactive and accommodative e-learning model. This model is applied by anyone, anywhere, and anytime utilizing the features and resources of various digital technologies alongside other forms of learning materials suitable for open and flexible learning environments. This definition includes aspects of pedagogy, material, and accessibility of learning (Khan, 2005).

In a similar way, Odunaike, Olugbara, and Ojo (2011) define e-learning as a form of computer-mediated teaching and learning pedagogy that utilizes electronic media such as web/internet, television, consumer devices, and distributed resources to improve the quality of teaching and learning offering access to knowledge. Jennex (2005) defines e-learning as a revolutionary approach that activates students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to change the way they teach into a learning benefit. It is the process of selectively applying knowledge from previous experiences to current and future decision-making activities with the explicit purpose of improving effectiveness.

Furthermore, Markus (2008) considers e-learning to be any form of computer-based learning, either remotely or in a face-to-face educational environment. Essentially, this is a shift from traditional forms of education or training to more personalized, flexible, individual, collaborative forms of learning based on Information and Communication Technologies and besides to a community of students, instructors, mediators, experts, etc. This definition indicates the revolutionary impact of network technology by adding more details about the educational methodology.

According to Pattnayak and Pattnaik (2016), e-learning is an educational activity that provides personalized, customized, comprehensive, and dynamic real-time learning material, in this way empowering knowledge communities, and connecting students and instructors with experts.

From the *communication* point of view, the fact is that the latest and modern literature review supports the important role of communication for knowledge building in electronic learning environments, in which learning appears not as an individual but a collective issue. Hence, there are definitions for e-learning that focus on the communicational dimension of e-learning in conjunction with the use of technological means. They emphasize that e-learning refers to electronically mediated asynchronous and/or synchronous communication for knowledge building and the

technological foundation of the use of the Internet and communication technologies (Garrison and Anderson, 2011).

According to Tao, Yeh, and Sun (2006), e-learning connects its communicative aspect with students' learning styles. In particular, they argue that the new learning environment allows students to receive personalized support and programs designed to be appropriate for them according to their learning peculiarities. This facilitates a high level of interaction and cooperation between instructors or between instructors and students compared to traditional learning environments.

Additionally, Al-Qahtani and Higgins (2013) emphasize the communicative relationship of students and argue that in an electronic environment, students are able to interact, both with the training material and with each other, without the physical presence of the instructor. Despite the technology explosion, it is impossible to implement e-learning if the technological, pedagogical, and administrative mechanisms required for a successful distance learning program using electronic and technological means are not joined in common sense.

At the same time, e-learning for Klasnja-Milicevic et al. (2017) is referred to as an educational philosophy, which states something more than simply technology. The impact of e-learning is not just on maintaining a multimedia platform but includes the social dynamic of networking, which is understood as the combined force of a global network capable of connecting instructors and students, as well as enhancing interaction and collaboration for knowledge exchange.

Recent e-learning definitions agree on the technological dimension of e-learning, however, they separate it from traditional learning and add to it more interactive material. Students can communicate in a variety of ways with their instructors and colleagues in the virtual classroom, where anyone can "raise" their hand, speak and interact in real-time at any time and any place (Gaikwad and Randhir, 2016; Yilmaz and Ulker, 2016).

E-learning, from its *technological* perspective, is referred to as one of the main applications of modern Internet technology (intranet, extranet, internet, etc.) and educational Information and Communication Technologies in the learning process. The integration of pedagogical, educational digital technology, and the Internet into modern learning environments is aimed at creating, providing, and enhancing

learning. (Bhatia, 2011; Li, Qi, Wang, & Wang, 2014). There are researchers, who further extend the e-learning definition to cover distributed learning, online distance learning, as well as hybrid learning.

Similarly, the e-learning model refers to the learning of students in an online environment. E-learning programs are partially or fully designed to be carried out online synchronously or asynchronously of education, and the learning is achieved through the use of Information and Communication Technology and in a more general and broader sense through eBooks, text messages, DVDs, etc. The Internet's growth and its applications have led to an increase in the utilization of computer systems in the learning process. This is the reason why educational institutions have an increasing need and requirement to utilize virtual learning environments, such as e-learning platforms, in order to increase the capacity of effective teaching, communication, monitoring, and evaluation of students' learning. (Oproiu, 2015; Vicheanpanya, 2014)

Other researchers referring to e-learning emphasize the evolution of distance learning, which has gradually been transformed into e-learning. The features of the e-learning process focus on the use of the Internet, the exchange of information at a global level, and learning resources. The use of technology to enhance and improve e-learning highlights its technological dimension (Docimini and Palumbo, 2013; Liu and Wang, 2009, Sangrà, Vlachopoulos, Cabrera, and Bravo, 2011).

One of the latest technologies in the field of e-learning is collaborative e-learning, which substantially contributes to increasing the number of students enrolled in universities' distance learning programs. Every e-learning system based in a collaborative environment facilitates exchange and access to the material of learning among users. The knowledge acquisition which is distributed and facilitated with the assistance of electronic means depends mainly on networks, computers, and multi-channel systems (e.g. wireless devices, mobile phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) (Venkataraman & Sivakumar, 2015).

According to Joksimovic et al. (2015), e-learning is defined as a form of distance learning, with technology to mediated into the learning process, teaching being provided entirely over the Internet, and those involved in the learning process not being required to be available at the same time and in the same place. The

technological dimension of e-learning refers to the technological explosion that marks the 21st century in the field of educational technology.

The above e-learning definitions can lead to a *holistic* perspective of the e-learning concept through an overview of its features. E-learning consists of a multimedia environment, which includes various information access networks, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and collaborative communication, while users have full control of their learning conditions by abandoning time and geographic constraints.

According to the aforementioned e-learning definitions, e-learning introduces many features which arise from the fact that e-learning is based on the combined exploitation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and networks. The learning material and the exchange messaging among the participants are carried out through the use of interactive tools in the learning and teaching procedure.

On the other hand, it is not just about delivering course material but at the same time includes all aspects of educational administration and the procedures of program planning, defining targets, implementation, assessment, and evaluation. It could also be complementary to traditional classroom teaching or even partially and/or fully replace it. E-learning could be some form of supervision on the part of the instructor, who acts as a supervisor and a mediator role of the entire educational procedure. Of course, it does not copy traditional education, but it offers alternative approaches to teaching and learning, systematically designing the procedures and the feedback.

Users can participate in e-learning through synchronous or asynchronous platforms, means of communication, technological media, and tools depending, each time, on the application which is installed and used. Furthermore, e-learning refers to integrated management of learning through Learning Management Systems (LMS) and Learning Content Management Systems (LCMS). It facilitates learning autonomy, personalization, and Lifelong Learning. It may be applied, both for educational purposes within or outside university educational institutions, as well as for other in-service educational purposes.

All the above e-learning features, as they are collected from a thorough study of the corresponding literature, could be presented in a concise and illustrated way,

as shown in Fig.1. According to Ionita, Visan, Niculescu, & Popa, 2015), e-learning is considered as a teaching and learning approach that represents all or part of an applied educational model by signaling a change in the learning paradigm. The interaction between instructors is aimed at the mutual exchange of educational perceptions, teaching methods, and more general concerns that contribute to the improvement of the learning process and their personal development as professionals.

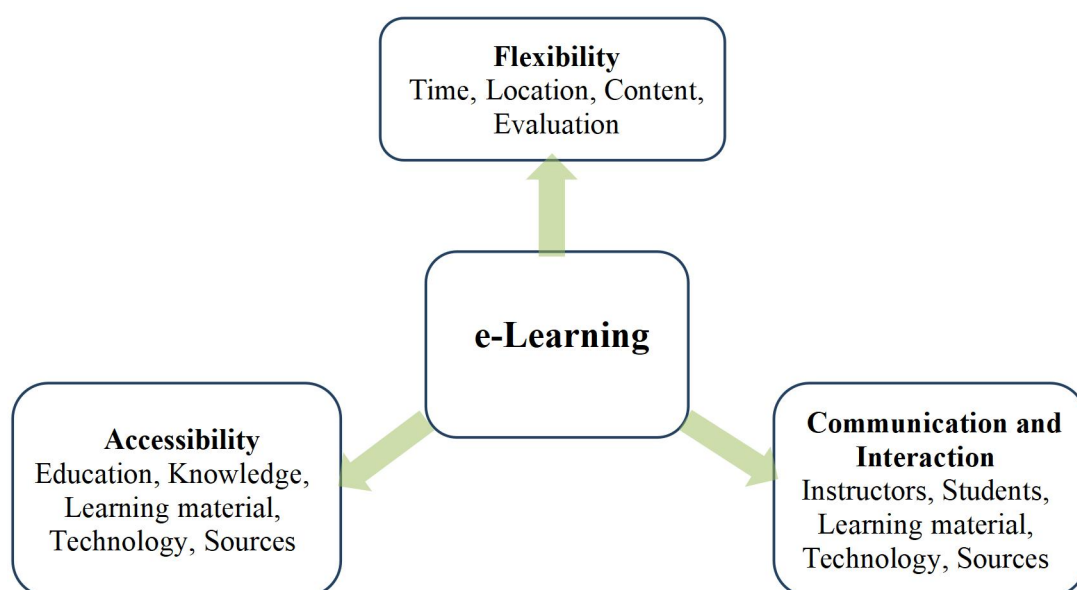


Figure 1: E-learning features.

Source: author's own.

E-Learning Dimensions

At this point, the degree of technology use of e-learning during the delivery of a course varies greatly. The different versions that make up the synthesis of different e-learning offer packages can be described by a set of parameters.

These parameters can be divided into four major dimensions: the dimension of synchronicity, space, independence, and operation mode. A component of an e-learning course can be characterized in any dimension by the value that its parameter can take (Wagner, Hassanein, and Head, 2008).

Specifically, e-learning can be carried out in a synchronous (in real-time) or in asynchronous (in flexible time) environment. Modern e-learning conduct includes video conferencing technologies and electronic whiteboards (Romiszowski, 2004), which require the presence of the student during the course.

Asynchronous learning, on the other hand, includes scheduled tutorials and auxiliary manuals that enable the student to edit the screens at his or her own pace, and at the time of his or her choice. Most of the courses available online are based on the asynchronous model.

In addition, students can attend classes from different places, such as distance learning, or in the same place, where they use the group support system of the classroom to work on the exercises assigned to them.

E-learning applications also differ in the degree of collaboration they require. Some courses are completely independent and individual, while others incorporate some elements of group learning, such as places and spaces for scientific discussions.

Finally, the access operation of the courses can be exclusively electronic (with or without a guide) or it can be a blended system that combines e-learning with traditional teaching in the classroom. This blended system is used by many current e-learning offer packages taking advantage of the different types of delivery of a course (Jack and Curt, 2001). At this point, it should be noted that a course will be characterized by a unique parameter in each dimension, however, a course may consist of different modules, and each one could be characterized by a separate dimension. So for example some modules can be delivered synchronously, while others asynchronously. A course also may include some online modules and some modules in the classroom (Wagner et al., 2008).

Advantages and Disadvantages of e-Learning

The fact is that e-learning is beneficial to education, corporations, and all types of students. It is reasonably priced, saves time, and produces measurable results. E-learning is more cost-effective than traditional learning because less money and time are spent traveling. Since e-learning has no geographic boundaries and no travel expenses, e-learning is far less expensive compared with the traditional way of education.

Another major benefit of e-learning is flexibility. This type of education has the advantage of taking a class anytime anywhere. Learning is available when and where it is needed. E-learning can take place at the office, at home, at a park, day or night, and even during weekends. E-learning also has immediately measurable self-

assessments which can be created so both instructors and students know what the students have learned when they've completed their courses, and what is their performance.

E-learning accommodates different types of learning styles. Hence, students can fit e-learning into their busy schedules, have the benefit of learning at their own pace, and also can learn through a variety of activities. In the case that they are working, they can still participate in an e-learning course. The students can do the learning after work or even at night by sitting in their homes.

Furthermore, e-learning inspires students to peruse information by using hyperlinks and websites on the Internet. They can find information relevant to their needs and interest, to select learning content that meets their level of knowledge, needs, and interest to perform more effectively in an activity.

In addition, e-learning, if it is not, should be more focused on the student and that makes it more interesting for the student because the final target is knowledge. Hence, e-learning is flexible and can be modified to meet the individual needs of the students. E-learning helps students to develop knowledge of the Internet by taking personal responsibility for their own learning and at the end of the day, this knowledge will help them in the future throughout their careers.

Instructors, institutions, and corporations take advantage of e-learning. Students, in many cases, enjoy having the opportunity to learn at their own pace, time, and place, and have it less costly.

This form of education apart from the benefits that were described above has a couple of disadvantages some of which are major. One major drawback of e-learning is that students need to have access to a computer and of course to the Internet. On one hand, they need to have some basic computer skills, to be familiarized with software such as office tools, internet browsers, and e-mail. On the other hand, slow or no internet connections or in some cases older computers may make accessing course materials very difficult. This may cause the students to get frustrated and finally give up.

The truth is that without good computer organizational skills students may lose or misplace reports causing them to not be on time in submitting their projects. Some

of the students but also instructors may have trouble installing software or any other tool that is required for the class.

E-learning, even if it is available anytime anywhere and without any geographical boundaries, it requires just as much time for attending a class and completing assignments, self-evaluation, and projects as any traditional classroom course. This means that students have to be highly motivated and responsible because all the work they do is on their own. Students with low motivation or bad study habits may fall behind and finally give up their entire effort.

Another disadvantage of e-learning is that without the routine structures that a traditional class offers, students may get lost or misunderstood, or confused about course activities and deadlines causing the student to fail or do poorly. Often students feel isolated from the instructor and when instructors and students aren't meeting face-to-face it is possible to misinterpret what was meant. The instructions are not always there and available to help the students, therefore each student needs to have discipline to work independently without any instructor's support, good writing, and communication skills.

Learning Theories

This section refers to the most important pedagogical learning theories, which are useful for evaluating the pedagogical outcomes and the e-learning system in total.

Behaviorism Learning Theory

Behaviorism theories are dominated by the perception that learning arises as a result of external impulses which are coming from the environment and the reaction of the human brain. Learning is defined as a change in the student's behavior that comes from experiences and exercises set by his instructor. Learning is done by enhancing the desired behavior, either through remuneration (positive reinforcement) or through penalty (negative reinforcement). Behaviorism appeals to the retransmission of information and the modification of behavior. Learning consists of modifying behavior. Some paradigms of behaviorism theories are a). Pavlov's Classical Dependent Learning (Pavlov, 1927), b) Thorndike's learning by trial and error (Thorndike, 1913) and c) Skinner's fact-finding Learning (Skinner, 1974).

Behaviorism is the philosophy behind software mainly for exercise and practice and generally behind the software that supports more on the individual work

of the student. This kind of software extensively uses the logic of positive reinforcement (with sounds, images, videos, etc.) and usually follows a linear path, broken down into successive stages of escalating difficulty. Each student can follow his own pace, which is something very positive for the procedure in total, but collaborative learning is not exploited. The positive ones are that the students can make mistakes (test and error), they immediately evaluate their performance, and they personalize and achieve small and step-by-step successes that enhance their confidence especially if they are not such good students. Of course, a serious disadvantage of this approach is that students are addicted to dependence on an external source of aid and external control of their actions, and there is no feedback and possibility for self-evaluation.

Cognitivism Learning Theory

In cognitivism theories (Bruner, 1966; Piaget, 1962), learning is not a process and result of dependence, as it happens in behaviorism, but the result of active processing of information based on the intermediate cognitive functions of the student, which are interjected between environmental information (impulse) and the student's reactions. Knowledge is not a stored experience, but the result of an active confrontation between the organization and the experience through which the student builds it through creative activities in his natural and social environment. Learning, from that point of view, consists of modifying knowledge that already exists. Therefore, the structure and function of the cognitive system play an important role in cognitivism theories, in contrast to behaviorism ones that focus on observed external behavior.

Constructivism Learning Theory

Constructivism focuses its interest on the structure and function of our cognitive system. Learning is the modification of knowledge. Learning is a subjective and internal process of constructing meanings and is considered the result of organizing and adapting new information to existing knowledge. In other words, it recognizes that students, before they even participate in an e-learning course, have the knowledge and the institute must help them to build new knowledge on the ones they already have.

Experientialism Learning Theory

According to Kolb (1984) developed his experiential model, as against a purer cognitive which formally recognized that students learn from experience and described learning as following a cycle of four experiential stages. Kolb argued that students can enter this cycle at any stage and learning is a process of repeatedly looping about these four stages. Feedback from the experience becomes key to the refinement of performance and therefore the student's ability to use knowledge in new circumstances. The experiential view of learning is taken into account as more sophisticated than pure behaviorism or constructivism because it represents a more holistic view of the student. However, like constructivism, experiential learning draws on the student's personal experience. The role of the facilitator is to encourage students to deal with the varying stages of the training cycle. One of the implications of this is often that the role of practitioners isn't about teaching specific knowledge or training fixed behaviors, but is one among helping the student discover approaches that employment for them.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism (Castro, 2006; Lave and Wenger, 1998) defines the interactive nature of knowledge construction as the result of the interaction between the student and the environment. Learning is the process of constructing internal models or representations of external structures as shaped by beliefs, culture, prior experience, and language, based on interactions with others. Concerning personal cognitive constructivism, the emphasis is not on internal cognitive processes, but on social processes which support the process of knowledge building. Thus, in such a framework, cognitive processes for knowledge building are not individual, but they take place in a learning community, where students participate in joint activities, with an active role. Expressions of the social constructivism learning framework are the Collaborative Learning Environments (CLE).

Moodle – An Asynchronous e-Learning Platform

Modular Object Oriented Learning Environment (Moodle) is free software and is considered as a Course Management System (CMS) or as a Learning Management System (LMS) or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), or more simply a software package for conducting online courses over the Internet, offering integrated asynchronous e-learning services.

Martin Dougiamas from Australia is the creator and author of Moodle, who created it in 1999 as part of his Ph.D. thesis on the principles of social construction. Dougiamas and Taylor (2000) published their first results on using Moodle. The research continued and Peter Taylor created the first Moodle website at Curtin University. He constructed a website using a new open-source courseware system called Moodle, developed by Martin Dougiamas.

Since 2001, anyone interested in Moodle platform could download it for free. The next year, Douriamas and Taylor (2002) published an article that summarizes an interpretive study designed to understand and represent the learning experiences of the students and improves the ability of Moodle as a tool to create online courses that embody and further develop our social constructionist pedagogical framework.

The first distribution (Moodle 1.0) took place in August 2002. Moodle users were already discussing its evolution into a new forum, creating compositions related to the website appearance (themes) and translating Moodle into other languages. Moodle is distributed under GNU Public License v3 (GPLv3), according to which it can be installed, distributed, modified, and improved free of charge, for common benefit.

Documentation, online courses, and available sources are available free of charge, following the terms of the above license agreement. Moodle is also certified under Learning Tool Interoperability (LTI), which is the global technical standard for the interoperability and integration of learning applications. Moodle platform is now being developed by the Moodle project run by Moodle HQ, an Australian company that is financially supported by a global network consisting of 60 Moodle Partner service companies.

Moodle has a wide variety of tools to support learning and teaching, including tools for resource management (documents, courses, glossary, etc.), communication support (forums, chat, blog, etc.), promoting teamwork (wiki, database, newsgroups, glossary, etc.), evaluation support (quiz, tasks, gradient), and management control (groups, calendar, usage reports, gradient, questionnaire, etc.). Therefore, an instructor using all these tools that Moodle platform offers, can interestingly present his or her course, assign tasks to students, have a synchronized discussion with the students, design and ask “multiple choice”, “true or false” or “short answer” questions to students, form discussion groups, add educational material, evaluate tasks, etc.

Based theoretically on the constructivist learning theory, it contains tools that orient the energy of learning in four main axes: (1) The variety of educational material approach through different languages of communication (texts, images, multimedia, etc.) and the teaching orientation in content creation, (2) The student's active attitude towards educational material, self-teaching and self-innovation learning, (3) The development of critical thinking and (4) The development of cooperation and flexibility in taking on a variety of roles within a research team.

Thus, the classroom is transformed into a laboratory and the student, practicing communication in a variety of languages, acquires more and more skills of interpretation and representation of the world. The knowledge acquired in this way is not sterile information, but a meaningful experience of the world, which gradually becomes more and more familiar, and better known.

Here, the first innovative dimension of the use of Moodle is detected: the epistemological differentiation in the representation of knowledge, which is traditionally limited to the written textual form of school textbooks. The instructor, as a guarantor of the adequacy of educational resources, takes care of the multiple - through Moodle - renewal of this representation by reordering the material and enriching it with different languages. Instructors, for their part, intervene in educational material and, by creating new content, take ownership of it, gradually building their own image of the world, and their personal worldview.

The second innovation is institutional: since its inception, Moodle has required users to take on roles within the course. Each user assumes a role in courses or modules that are registered. The roles - and together with the privileges that accompany them - alternate to the extent that the student-user creating content is upgraded within the system. If Moodle successfully enters the classroom, the virtual taking on different roles is accompanied by a similar rotation of roles in reality. Thus, the ordinary registered student can be upgraded to course creator, or responsible for teaching a module, while the instructor can be an administrator or even a student in the same course.

The third innovation concerns networking. Students and the instructor are divided into groups, exchanging messages from within the platform, sharing resources, or -even - co-forming content through Moodle's embedded wikis. They then invite other classes of their institute (or another institute) to share their work and

participate in their research. The institute exploits these networks to contact other institutes and work with them.

The distribution of version 2.0 began in November 2010, with new features being added every six months. Moodle launched version 3.0 in November 2015 and now Moodle is running version 3.11 (Moodle News, 2021).

It is written in PHP programming language and can use various types of databases (mainly MySQL). It is cross-platform, i.e. it "runs" on all known operating systems and there is also a mobile app available in the most popular online mobile app stores, such as Google Play (for Android), App Store (for iOS), and Windows Phone Store (for Windows Phone OS).

Moodle can be used to create educational websites, which range from simple personal websites to websites of educational institutions, companies, etc.

Using Moodle, course administrators (who may even be non-specialist users, such as instructors) can create their own course websites and update its content, which is immediately visible to (registered) website users. As it is free of charge, each educational institution that wants to use it can add as many Moodle servers as it needs. In addition, it can be customized to meet the needs of each e-learning scenario.

Moodle Philosophy

The design and development of Moodle are based on the principles of social constructivism, which extends constructivism to a social framework. In particular, Moodle's philosophy focuses mainly on individual learning and the student's active attitude toward educational material. In addition, it aims to develop critical thinking and collaboration, through role-playing and content creation within a team. Moodle promotes information sharing and networking, as students and instructors, through the platform, exchanges messages, and co-shape its content. They can then share their work with students from other institutes, creating collaboration networks.

A building block of Moodle is the courses that include activities and learning digital material. Moodle provides the instructor with useful tools to support asynchronous e-learning, such as transcripts, calendars, discussion groups (forums), submission of various types of assignments, glossaries, and lists of terms, collaborative creation of websites (wikis), blogs, questionnaires for data collection by

students, online quizzes, feedback from students, instant messages (chat), lists of participants, interface with other systems, etc.

A learning environment has to be flexible and adapt to the needs of participants. Following this philosophy, Moodle provides the ability to assign roles to participants on the site. These roles can be customized, giving different levels of access to users depending on their roles (e.g. student, instructor, non-editing teacher, manager, etc).

The website of each course is the main space that each instructor customizes because Moodle enables him to add and remove activities in a very simple way. Users' access to activities may be restricted according to various conditions. Multiple settings are also possible, such as changing the appearance of the site, but also integrating external systems to the platform, such as authentication systems, new users' registration, etc.

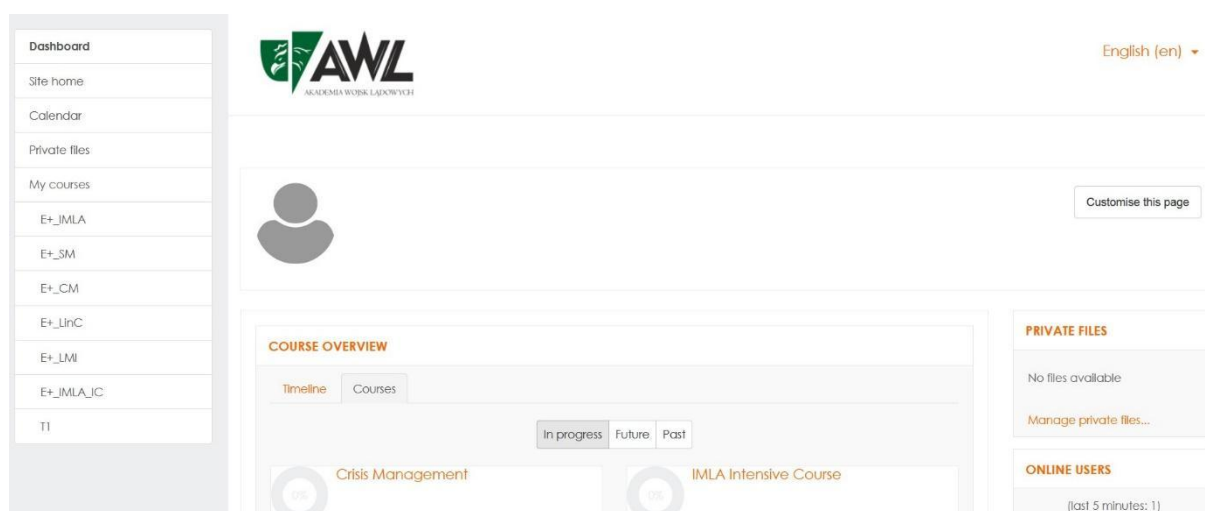
Moodle platform: Structure and Use

Moodle finds a variety of applications and uses both in educational institutions and universities, as well as in other public and military organizations, health organizations, but also companies. According to Moodle World Statistics (2021), there are 191,000 registered websites in 248 countries. These websites included in the second quarter of 2021 more than 37 million courses and over 277 million users and more than 1,570 billion enrolments. These statistics are updated daily. However, as Moodle does not require site registration using the platform, these numbers are approximate. As mentioned above, a prerequisite for installing Moodle is the existence of a World Wide Web server (such as an Apache server), the support of a programming language by the World Wide Web server (such as PHP), as well as a database management server (such as MySQL database).

Moodle works without any changes to Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, etc. operating systems, as well as most web host providers. There are also built-in Moodle combinations with World Wide Web and database servers for Windows and Mac OS X. Especially for instructors without technical knowledge, there are free Moodle web hosting providers. These sites provide the ability to create online courses based on the Moodle platform, without the need to install Moodle locally.

Also, certified partners (Moodle Partners) provide services such as hosting, training, and setting up the Moodle platform.

The basic structure of a Moodle website includes the front page, which usually displays information about the educational institution (Fig. 1). The site administrator chooses how the site visitors connect to the platform: they can log in automatically



from another system, create accounts themselves, or have already been given login credentials.

Fig. 1: Moodle first page

Internally, after the user logs in, the platform is organized around the lessons, which are essentially websites within Moodle with educational material and activities. Courses can be created by users of the platform with the following roles: course administrators, course creators, and course managers. Users with the role of teacher can add content and organize their courses according to their needs. The courses usually have a central section in which the educational material is displayed and side sections (called blocks) with additional information and functions (Fig. 2).

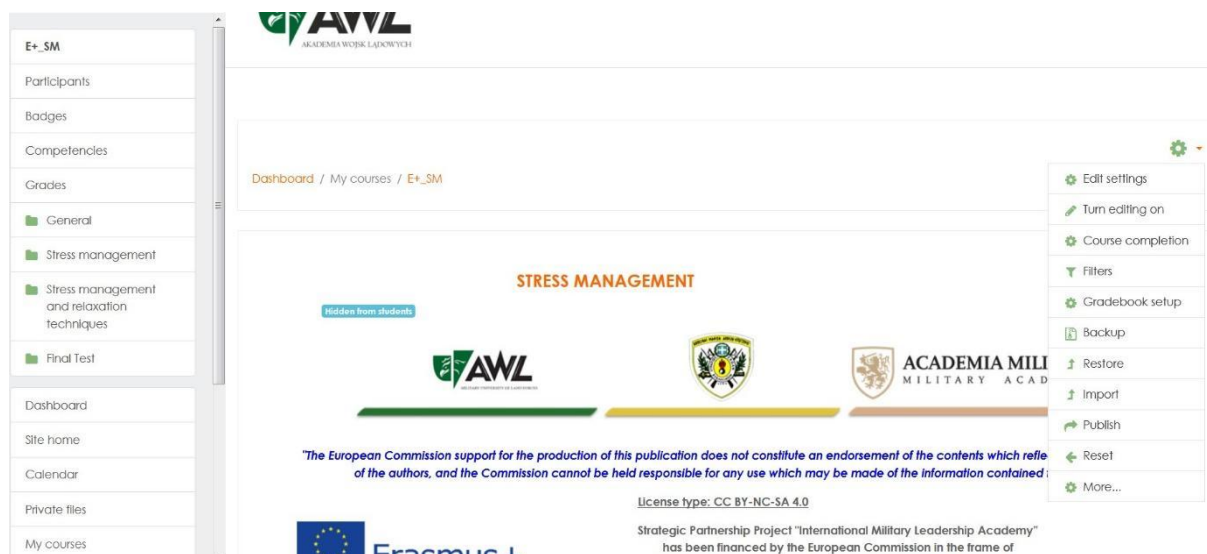


Fig. 2: The structure of a Moodle course

Students can enroll in a course either on their own or manually by their teacher or automatically by the site administrator. Regarding the roles of Moodle users, they are assigned by the site administrator, depending on the needs of each course. That is, users do not initially have a predefined role or rights in the platform.

Moodle has several features and capabilities for all the participants who are registered on the platform even if they are administrators, managers, instructors, non-editing teachers, students or guests. The major and most popular ones are

- *User interface*: special attention has been paid to the design of the user interface so that it is accessible and responsive on both computer screens and mobile devices.
- *Collaborative tools*: Moodle supports the collaboration of the participants, through many different types of activities that are integrated into the standard version. Examples are the assignments, the creation of discussion groups (fora), the collaborative creation of a dictionary (the glossary), as well as the workshops for the activation of peer assessment among the students.

- *My home*: It is a customizable page that displays alerts to each user (e.g. unread posts in fora, and includes hyperlinks to each user's courses (Fig. 3).

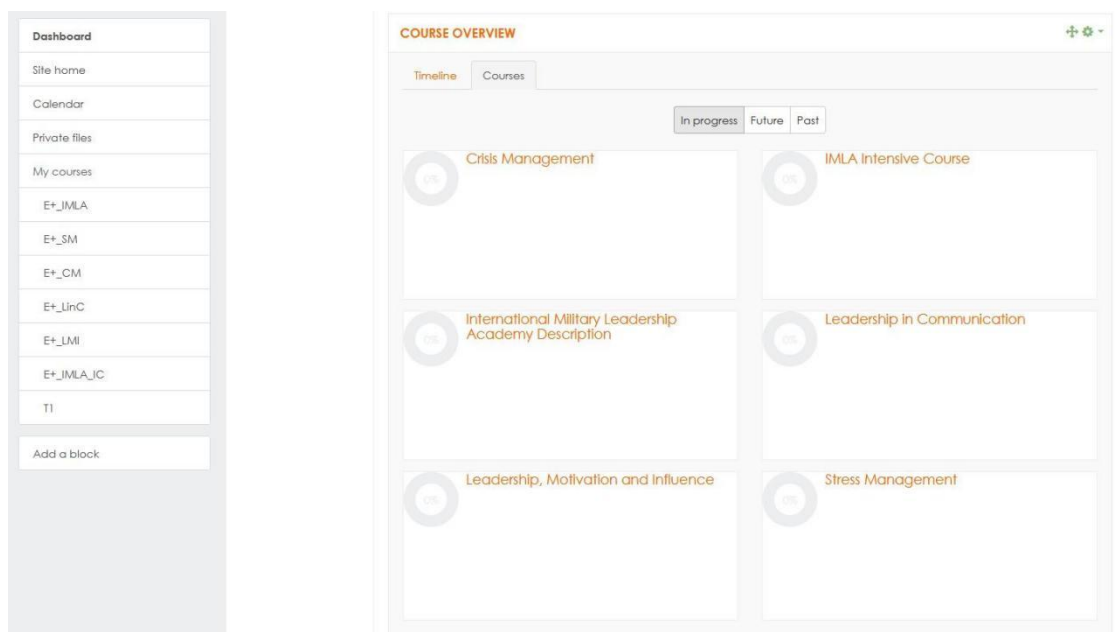


Fig. 3: Moodle page “My home” of a user

- *Progress monitoring*: Both instructors and students can monitor their progress at the individual activity level or the course level. In addition, Moodle gives to the instructor the opportunity to award prizes (badges) to students based on selected criteria. Moodle signals are fully compatible with the Mozilla Open Badges and can be displayed on the student's profile as well as in public signals' collections.
- *Notifications*: Users can enable notifications to receive automated notifications about tasks, forum posts, personal messages, etc.
- *Secure User Authentication and Registration*: Over 50 different ways and options are provided for user authentication and secure registration on a Moodle website as well as Moodle courses.
- *Customizable website look and structure*: The look of the site can be easily changed by adding logos, and images, changing the color scheme of the site, etc. Moodle and many fora provide themes that can be installed to change the look and appearance of a Moodle website or an individual course. Users can also create their own themes.

- *Multi-language capability*: Users can view course content in their own language.
- *Embedding multimedia material*: Both instructors and students can add multimedia to their site. Multimedia material includes video, audio, images, and code from websites such as Google Maps, etc.

The features and tools provided by Moodle are not limited to the aforementioned ones. Some other useful features, which were not discussed above, are the simple word processor, the easy backup, the open-source standards, the hundreds of plug-ins that extend the functionality of Moodle, the reports and logs, the group management, the peer evaluation, the self-evaluation, etc.

International Military Leadership Academy

Intending to enhance the interoperability of the Armed Forces of the Member States and promote a European security and defense culture, the European Union is planning training programs to enhance the exchange of young officers during the initial phase (undergraduate program) of their training.

Carriers of the strategic culture, apart from the political elite, the political parties, and public opinion, are also the institutions such as the Armed Forces, while its main exponents are, above all, the political and military leadership of a state/nation or a supranational - transnational entity. Recently, several positive results have been recorded thanks to the efforts of many member states, but also to the support of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) and, in particular, the Implementation Group (IG).

The Initiatives are not simply aimed at teaching "EU issues", but also focus on a "wider exchange of programs", in the context of "training and education", facilitating, in that way, the dissemination of a "European security and defense culture" among the "new officers" which is actually the main target group.

Several Member States have already absorbed the "added value" of such Initiatives and continue to remain a long-term effort, which should be carried out, ideally, by all EU Member States. It must, of course, be approached through a broader framework of achieving a "strategic target", as described in the Treaty of the European Union/Article 42, that is, the provision for a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), aiming at the progressive formation of a Common EU Defence Policy.

In particular, following important initiatives in the field of deepening the EU's military integration, the Common Defence Policy is finally expected to be led to a Common European Defence.

The International Military Leadership Academy (IMLA) project is the creation of an integrated course program, focused on leadership skills and competencies, which will be available and open for use by the Military Academies of the European Union (EU). In the framework of a broad, comprehensive, and coherent approach to the *Military Leadership* field, the whole IMLA project consists of four areas of training (Common Modules - CMs), among the three partners: CM Stress Management (Poland), CM Leadership in Communication (Portugal), CM Crisis Management (Greece) and CM Leadership, Motivation and Influence (Poland). All these common modules have appropriate educational material which is designed and developed by the three countries that participated in the particular strategic partnership. All the educational material is in an electronic form consisting of e-books, videos, exams, assessments, etc., and has been uploaded to the internet and is manageable and manipulated via an asynchronous e-learning platform (Moodle) in which a suitable space for these four modules and generally for whole IMLA project has been created. Besides, thematic centers have been established in all project partners in order to increase the capabilities and quality of future European military leaders.

The overall result of the project will be the strengthening of even closer relations between the EU military academies, the continuation/consolidation of the exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of military training, with particular emphasis on modern military leadership (theoretical and applied). In this context, the main objective of the IMLA project is to enhance the skills of cadets when operating in a multinational environment, through participation in transnational workshops and military exercises, where they acquire the opportunity to operate and lead in a group. Moreover, the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and skills on leadership issues and the creation of a platform for cooperation, mobility, contacts, and multicultural dialogue, through a modern simulated model of education, constitutes an additional gain for cadets and lecturers participating in this effort.

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Annexes

Annex 1 – IMLA Project Board Founding Act

Annex 2 – IMLA Intellectual Outputs

Annex 3 – “My Path to Leadership” Interview

Annex 4 – IMLA Book of Evaluations

IMLA Project Board Founding Act

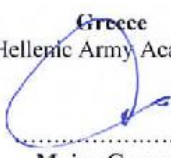


THE PROGRAM BOARD FOUNDING ACT

We, the representatives of military education institutions forming
The Strategic Partnership
Understanding the necessity of international cooperation
And common goal of strengthening European security
Duly declare the willingness to cooperate within the International Project
International Military Leadership Academy
For more effective development of military leaders
And agree to form Executive Program Board
To supervise and support all activities prescribed by the Project
In order to ensure its quality and successful completion
In accordance with
The standards set out by the higher education systems of Partner countries.

Athens, Greece, 9th November 2018

Signatures of the Program Board Members:

Greece
Hellenic Army Academy

Major General
Charalambos LALOUSIS

Poland
Military University of Land Forces

Brigadier General
Dariusz SKORUPKA, DSc,
Associate Professor

Portugal
Academia Militar

Major General
João Jorge Botelho Vieira
BORGES, PhD, MSc



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IMLA Intellectual Outputs




PROGRAMME OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

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PROGRAMME OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY INTENSIVE COURSE

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E-books



E-learning courses



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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

E-LEARNING COURSES

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The Programme of the International Military Leadership Academy is the outcome of cooperation among three military education institutions from three EU countries: Greece, Poland and Portugal, within the framework of the Strategic Partnership. The partner military academies and universities are responsible for educating cadets and preparing junior officers for their respective armed forces. Their education programmes are designed to address current and future challenges, as well as threats to the security of their nations and global security. Moreover, their aim is to develop a well-educated, trained, open-minded and effective leader as well as a citizen of their respective nations and the European Union. These three military education institutions bring their experience and expertise into the Partnership to extend the competencies of future military leaders.

The key activities of the Programme focus on supplementing and strengthening the existing leader development processes of the European military academies. The unification of the teaching process and an increase in international training opportunities will allow military students to choose and pursue their studies and personal development in an international environment, which will further prepare them for efficient cooperation within the framework of European military units built to strengthen a safe and secure EU.

Taking account of Sectorial Qualifications for level 6, which had been selected, drafted and approved by the international military community of the Implementation Group, four areas of leader development were identified. These four areas were addressed by the workshops focusing on training as well as developing skills and competencies related to communication, managing crises and stress, and motivating and influencing other people.

They are designed in such a way as to optimize the effects focusing on practical activities in residence (during traditional mobility), preceded by theoretical classes supported with ICT technology. All of them are accompanied by dedicated textbooks, prepared explicitly by the authors of the respective workshop programmes, allowing students to prepare for practical classes and following e-learning-based theoretical lessons. Practical parts, conducted both indoors and outdoors, are supported by thematic centres that were designed and equipped especially for that purpose.



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STRESS MANAGEMENT

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Description:

Stress is a fact of life, wherever you are and whatever you do. You cannot avoid stress, but you can learn to manage it, so it cannot cope with it. Changes in our life - such as going to college, getting married, changing jobs or illness - are frequent sources of stress. Remember that changes that cause stress can also benefit you. Moving from home to university, for example, creates opportunities for personal development - new challenges, friends and living conditions. That is why it is so important to get to know each other and carefully consider the causes of stress. Learning this takes time and, although stress cannot be avoided, the good news is that you can minimize the harmful effects of stress, such as depression or hypertension. The key is to develop awareness of how to interpret and react to circumstances. This awareness will help you develop techniques for coping with stress. For example, as a commander of a military platoon, stress management will require techniques that involve self-awareness and its soldiers.

Stress affects the body in many ways. Some signs of stress are obvious; others may not be noticeable or detectable until they become serious. People also have different ways to respond to stress. For example, some people who have a more positive temperament may not be as affected by stressful events as others. Living in complex, demanding culture can lead to chronic stress, resulting in physical, mental and spiritual suffering. Stress reduces the response of the immune system, increasing the susceptibility of the person to disease and serious illness. It triggers the release of cortisol, a hormone responsible for the immune system, regulation of blood pressure, release of insulin and inflammation. Although this reaction is known as an air or combat reaction, it may be useful in certain situations, chronic activation of this hormone can damage the body, increasing the likelihood of diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. One of the effective methods of stress management is relaxation therapy, the aim of which is to lower the level of autonomic stimulation of a given person. Techniques used in relaxation therapy include physical exercise, yoga, guided imaging, aromatherapy, meditation, music therapy (listening or playing music), journalism, progressive loosening of deep muscles, autogenic training and diaphragmatic breathing.

Keywords:

Coaching, communication, coping with stress, emotion, stress management, time management, stress response, type of stressors, responsibility, post-traumatic stress syndrome, disorder, stress relief, stress reduction.

Further Reading:

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2. Stephen Palmer, Cary Cooper, *How to Deal with Stress*, Kogan Page Publishers, 2013, p.7-20.
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4. J. Barton Cunningham, *The Stress Management Sourcebook: Everything You Need to Know*, McGraw Hill Professional, 2000, p.3-4; 27.
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CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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Description:

Introduction to *leadership, crisis management and decision- making theories*; analysis of main conceptual approaches and presentation of methodological issues related to theory-building and development.

Based on basic theoretical and methodological framework, as well as on leadership, crisis management, crisis leadership, and decision- making interaction, all necessary knowledge concerning concepts and interaction among them, has been created. This helps comprehend main theory framework and facilitate the translation of theory into an applied leadership in current environment characterized as extreme and dangerous.

Overview of regional and global politico- military and strategic crisis contexts. Description of the current spectrum of conflicts, war and MOOTW operations. Introduction to strategic leadership and *strategic thinking* and presentation of *extreme context* concept.

The analysis of current international security environment helps understand all novelties and the uniqueness of evolving combat context. Additionally, the realization that armed forces are operating in *extreme contexts*, being involved in MOOTW operations, helps understand their essentially- changed roles, duties, and tasks, while recognizing current complexities in effectively responding and operating in crises.

Outline of basic principles and strategies, at all levels of command. Introduction to stability operations and overview of current level of operations. Conceptual definition of UN *Multidimensional Peacekeeping* and presentation of military leadership and doctrines. Detailed, comparative overview of military command, leadership and command, in current extreme contexts.

Based on a conceptual approach of Command, Control, Management and Leadership, a basic knowledge framework is created. This helps understand evolution in thinking, at all levels, and, especially, its impact on current military operations (wide spectrum). Basic framework of UN provides current state of international community's involvement in areas of instability, crises and conflicts. Thus, it has become absolutely clear for leaders to remain aware of all those conditions that characterize current operating environment as dangerous, uncertain and extreme. This is the operating environment in which they will be required to exercise leadership.

Keywords:

Leadership, Crisis Management, Crisis Management Concepts and Stages, Crisis Management Phases and Methods.

Further Reading:

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LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNICATION

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Description:

In the modern world, nothing exists without Institutions or Organizations, whose diversified presence extends to sectors as diverse as: education; the health; the sport; the religion; trade unions; business activity and of course, the Armed Forces. However, these organizations to survive have to a large extent to depend on the effectiveness and efficiency of their leadership. Leadership is one of the central concerns of living in society.

Communication is the key and the basis of relationships. Whether we communicate verbally or nonverbally, the main point that will constitute the one and only bridge amongst people will always be communication. The art and skills to transmit a message, an idea in the most effective way are not known by many people. We can all pass messages, and we do, sometimes not even being aware of the content we are transmitting to others, the difference between a good communicator and a poor one is the way we use our communicative skills to better perform the task. In this lesson we provide you with some of the basic and most effective tools one can use in order to become a good communicator and also a good leader.

Communication is an essential process in the development of group culture. The type of communication structure determines leadership, roles and the status hierarchy within the group (Hare, 1992). Different types of communication are needed for different tasks. Complex problem-solving is facilitated by decentralized communication networks (Shaw, 1981). As recommended by Wheelan (1994), the choice of a communication network might be more effective if strategies of decision-making were outlined in advance and if urges to stabilize the structure too early were resisted, as there is considerable resistance to change once these structures are established. Awareness of these issues is usually low and it is one of the tasks of the group leader or facilitator to bring them to the group attention.

Keywords:

Further Reading:

Cherry, K. (2018). Leadership styles and frameworks you should know.

Cunha, M. P., Rego, A., Cunha, R. C., & Cabral-Cardoso, C. (2007). *Manual do comportamento organizacional e gestão*. 6.^a edição. Lisboa: Editora RH. ISBN: 978-972-8871-16-1

Khan, I. (2014). *Command, leadership or management? An enigmatic triad*. Pakistan Navy.

Rouco, J. C. (2012). *Modelos de gestão de desenvolvimento de competências de liderança em contexto militar*. Tese de doutoramento em Gestão pela Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa.

Rosinha, A. & Matias, L. (2015). *Casos de liderança em contexto militar. A prática à luz da teoria*. Lisboa. Coleções ARES. Instituto de Estudos Superiores Militares. ISBN: 978-989-99171-7-0.

Vieira, B. (2002). *Liderança militar*. Lisboa: Editora Atena, Academia Militar.



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LEADERSHIP, MOTIVATION AND INFLUENCE

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Description:

This section contains basic knowledge about the theory of motivation. One of the most important tasks of the leader is shaping permanent and strong motivation in a group. Methods and techniques of motivation Individual employee motivation. This part presents the basic knowledge of the scope of how to motivate yourself and Subordinates.

Keywords:

Leadership, Motivation

Further Reading:

1. P. Zimbardo, Psychologia i życie, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2012.
2. L. Deckers Motivation Biological, Psychological, and Environmental, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.
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4. J. H. Laurence, Michael D. Matthews, The Oxford Handbook of Military Psychology, 2012.
5. Mayer, D.M. (2012), "A Positive Lens on Organisational Justice: Toward a Moral, Constructive, and Balanced Approach to Reactions to Third Party (In)justice", in: Cameron, K.S., Spreitzer, G.M. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organisational Scholarship*, Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York.



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INTENSIVE PROGRAM IMLA

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The course is divided into two main parts. The first one is conducted entirely by students under the supervision of their instructors. The other one is conducted by instructors who aim to expand students' knowledge and skills and verify the effects of the course during the practical exercise "Platoon Leader". In order to prepare for the Intensive Course, cadets undergo training based on e-learning materials.

During the first week students assume the role of instructors and conduct classes in order to transfer the knowledge acquired from modules conducted at the partner universities. Each class is prepared in consultation with the lecturers responsible for the module in order to ensure their appropriate level. Every day during the first week students are divided into four groups. In each group, three students are responsible for classes, while the others act as trainees. The students in the role of instructors are evaluated by both lecturers and other students in order to obtain reliable feedback on their organizational and instruction skills.

Throughout the course different kinds of activities are organized (e.g. city games, land navigation, football/volleyball tournaments) with the purpose of making cadets cooperate in international teams. Cadets are to be subjected to peer evaluation during the first and second weeks to gather information and observe changes occurring in their personalities.

Description:

Stress is integral part of the leader actions. Decisions under time-pressure, difficult circumstances, human factor and unpredictability of courses of action result in heavy stress, therefore leaders must develop their own skills and competencies in reducing and coping with own stress and stress of their unit's members. This course will provide you with several approaches to stress management and techniques to reduce it.

In order to accomplish any given task, a leader must have a cohesive and well-functioning team. Building a team requires from its leader specific skills and competencies. These are connected to motivation and influence. However difficult the task, the team-building process is never ending story. Even well-functioning team needs constant motivation to fulfill challenging tasks vested upon them by superior commanders. To be successful in motivating and influencing others, a leader must understand its own internal and external motivating factors. This course will provide you with several techniques and tips into the motivation process. Time is a subjective phenomenon and your brain has the ability to manage its perception of this phenomenon. Therefore, the ability to manage time is first and foremost a thinking strategy. To learn it, you need specific and non-standard exercises that will require real engagement from you. By implementing the following methods, your mind will start organizing itself more effectively in every 24 hours of your life. Good communication is what separates a poor leader from a unique one. Having effective communication skills is the key to good leadership. When you communicate well with your team, it helps to eliminate misunderstandings and may encourage a healthy and peaceful work environment. Efficient and open communication with your team will allow you to work quickly and professionally. After opening the lines of communication with the team, the process of



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task and project implementation will most likely go by smoothly. In addition, you will be surprised how achieving goals will be much easier. In general, team-building activities can be divided into two categories: indoor and outdoor activities. Classes in rooms, due to where they are run, usually have a different nature from outdoor activities. Usually you will conduct these activities during normal business/duty hours or at most during a weekend. If you are at a team retreat, your activities will largely be outside, not inside a conference room. There are many games and activities that make people work as a team to accomplish a task. It is necessary that the leader chooses the right ones, considering the group's profile, conditions and his/her goal.

Keywords:

Leadership, Stress, Stress reduction techniques, Stress Management, Resilience

Further Reading:

Robert M. Sapolsky, *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: An Updated Guide to Stress, Stress-Related Diseases and Coping*, Holt Paperbacks; 3rd edition, 2004

Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*, Delta 1990

Susan M. Orsillo, *The Mindful Way through Anxiety: Break Free From Chronic Worry and Reclaim Your Life*, the Guilford Press, 2011

Richard O'Connor, *Undoing Perpetual Stress: The Missing Connection Between Depression, Anxiety and 21st Century Illness*, Berkley 2007

Margaret Wehrenberg, *The 10 Best-Ever Anxiety Management Techniques*, W. W. Norton & Company 2008

Troy DuFrene, *Things Might Go Terribly, Horribly Wrong: A Guide to Life Liberated from Anxiety*, New Harbinger Publications 2010

Steven C. Hayes, *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life*, New Harbinger Publications 2005



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“My Path to Leadership” Interview



SCENARIO

OF AN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH OUTSTANDING LEADERS WITHIN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROJECT “INTERNATIONAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY”

Paweł WASILEWSKI

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Wrocław 2018

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Scenario of “My Path to Leadership” Interview

The purpose of the interviews is to gather information about the respondents' experiences. These interviews are intended to show the path of the respondents to become leaders: their personal experiences, difficulties that emerged on their ways of development and what happened that they have become such. They are aimed at showing what factors matter and what environmental determinants are decisive, where the respondent met moments of doubt and how they managed to rebuild their inner motivation. These interviews are to show the students that the path to become a leader is not simple and they will not always be successful, but it is possible and worth the hardships and sacrifices. The leader does not become a leader overnight, and one can never stop developing themselves nor their competence. It is a difficult and responsible function requiring many sacrifices and skills such as making decisions and taking responsibility for them, as well as having distance to yourself and the surrounding reality. But what the interviews are also meant to demonstrate is that being a leader is possible, it gives a lot of satisfaction and fulfillment that provide a gigantic boost of energy to life.

Interviews should be conducted with people who are perceived by the environment as those with whom you can do even the most difficult task, and with them or for them you can sacrifice very much and even yourself. Candidates for interviews should have achievements in management practice, with a strong focus on resources that we can qualify for leadership traits. They should be people with many years of experience in managing human teams. Individuals who their subordinates, as well as objective observers – specialists, can identify as leaders. These people have experience and measurable achievements in managing human teams in the battlefield environment. The target group of recipients of the materials will be cadets of senior military schools. Future graduates of military schools are managers. They should have organizational and leadership skills that ensure preparation for management, where the work environment should be properly organized, skillfully targeted, motivated, ready to take on challenges, build a task force, identify its strengths and weaknesses and consistently develop it. In addition, graduates, as leaders, should be equipped with mechanisms of self-reflection and consistent readiness for continuous self-improvement, in order to be able to effectively manage sub-units at higher levels of command in the future.

Questions for the interview were generated by all partners, taking into account the specificity of their work environment and cultural differences. After collecting a working list containing about 40 questions, all partners agreed on the duration of a single interview, specifying it for 10 minutes, and thus the number of questions and areas of the most interesting and the most universal in terms of cultural and environmental differences.

After a series of consultations, a final list of 10 questions has been set, which will be asked to each of the interlocutors. The questions were selected in such a way as to obtain benefits regardless of where the interviews, cultural and environmental differences of both respondents and material recipients will be carried out. During the consultation, it was also determined in which order the questions will be asked during the interview.

Interview questions “My Path to Leadership”:

1. Soldiers are LOYAL to their homeland, subordinates and superiors. Please explain how you understand LOYALTY.
2. What does leadership mean to you?
3. Can you name a leadership position in which you learnt the most? Why?
4. In your opinion, what were the most significant differences between leading people of your own nationality and those from a different country?
5. What are the most important values in your work and life?
6. Are leaders born or made?
7. *What is the most difficult decision you have had to make in your career?*
8. As a commander, how do you relate with other people you work with?
9. Which of the principles of leadership you have learnt, namely at the Military Academy, do you use most often?
10. What advice would you give to a young officer that could help him/her become a good leader?

List of questions in order:

Interviews are to be film material. They should be structured in such a way that the whole interview can be played back, as well as the answers of all participants to an interesting topic. Interviews should be carried out using a video and audio recording device, after obtaining the consent of the persons with whom we want to conduct interviews. In the case of one interview, you should book about one and a half hours. The place should be prepared to ensure peace, free from external noises that may interfere with sound recording, free from third parties and on a suitably neutral background. It is necessary to provide the person with whom we talk with the comfort of expression (a place to sit comfortably, something to drink, safety). The person conducting the interview should initially greet with a few neutral sentences (ask), suggest a place to sit, drink something and only after a moment to go to the merits of the meeting. Questions should be asked in the order specified here. The leader should not introduce chaos and nervousness, express questions calmly and clearly, do not call for statements, ask questions, but avoid sensitive questions, make a calm statement to the person being listened to. It is important that the answer contains all the thoughts that the speaker wanted to convey. Finally, the interviewer should thank the interlocutor for their time and valuable speeches.

Materials contained in interviews strengthen the process of shaping the personality of candidates for officers' leaders. Interview, as a method of learning about the social situation or social groups in the context of their surroundings, connected with direct contact with an outstanding person, has a much stronger social impact on the recipient. The experience of someone who has already traveled the path, at the beginning of which is a young adept of command and achieved success, is of great importance in the didactic process. Interview is the basic research aimed at discovering various relationships between particular elements of the didactic process. It allows us to examine specific facts that are isolated cases, but which we can extend to social phenomena. In the interview we move areas of historical consciousness that cover the speaker's knowledge, beliefs and attitudes. The discussed problem is pervaded, which updates the didactic experience and increases the psychophysical resources of the conversation recipient. Also, an interview with outstanding people, in this case with leaders-leaders, has a very strong motivating

action for future leaders. It shows them the way and the possibilities to become a leader and opens the minds for readiness and need for improvement in this field.

List of Interviews “My Path to Leadership”

Rank and Name*	Country	Address
Colonel Krzysztof Klupa	Poland	https://youtu.be/XIkI06BAVqY
Lieutenant General Marek Tomaszewski	Poland	https://youtu.be/Njo73JQNC_s
Lieutenant General Rajmund Andrzejczak	Poland	https://youtu.be/mlzKEH3o48A
Major Izabela Polanska	Poland	https://youtu.be/cosMdqJNrKM
Major General D. Choupis	Greece	https://youtu.be/ldj1fg0c-QU
Colonel Fasianos	Greece	https://youtu.be/w4xnFnVvkTM
General Konstantinos Gkinis	Greece	https://youtu.be/EIDNZ1_af30
Colonel Michail Ploumis	Greece	https://youtu.be/sqw3l5FIMMg
Brigade General Morgado Baptista	Portugal	https://youtu.be/EsHlKTupYSw
Colonel Duarte Costa	Portugal	https://youtu.be/Wzelahl614o
Colonel Lemos Pires	Portugal	https://youtu.be/D7sXVg9lItY
Lieutenant Colonel Brito Teixeira	Portugal	https://youtu.be/q1uRaNsEoxE

* Ranks of interviewed officers indicated in the table were current at the time of interviews recording.

Evaluation Booklet Strategic Partnership Project: International Military Leadership Academy



EVALUATION BOOKLET STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROJECT: *INTERNATIONAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY*

**Marcin BIELEWICZ
Anna ZAMIAŁ-ZIOLKOWSKA**

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