

## MINUTES *from* Steering Committee Meeting

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**Date:** 14th of December, 2017

**Venue:** Independent University of Banja Luka

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Participants: Amra Tuzovic, Selma Seta (University of Travnik); Ljubica Tomic Selimovic (University of Tuzla); Sinisa Opic (University of Zagreb); Nijaz Skender (University of Bihac); Mirjana Stojanovic (Independent University of Banja Luka); Ljiljana Kovac (Association of Preschool Institution Employees); Vesna Susac (University of Mostar); Marko-Antonio Brkic (Herzegovina University); Karolina Kardas (The Manchester Metropolitan University); Teodora Iordachescu, Grigore-Dan Iordachescu (University of Alba Iulia); Zuzana Lynch (Matej Bel University) – Skype.

The First Steering Committee Meeting officially started at 10.00 am. All institutions were present, including Professor Zuzana Lynch from Matej Bel University in Slovakia, who joined the meeting via Skype.

On behalf of the University of Travnik TEACHER Team, Selma Seta welcomed all participants and thanked representatives of the Independent University of Banja Luka for their host and organization. Then, she shortly presented the Agenda of the Steering Committee Meeting:

1. WORKPLAN for project year 1
2. WORKPLAN for project year 2
3. Financial issues and Equipment
4. Accreditation process

She told that the first two points will be presented by her and the second two points by Professor Amra Tuzovic. Then, Selma started with her presentation of project plan for first and second year. She presented a table with activities of the first project year. She explained each activity

# TEACHER

Introducing competence - based preschool teacher education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
574076-EPP-1-2016-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

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and its implementation. It is mentioned that almost all activities are implemented except four of them:

1. Steering Committee Meeting which is happening at the moment,
2. Quality Assurance and Monitoring Committee Meeting planned for 20<sup>th</sup> of December via Skype,
3. Development of curricula modernization and innovation plans and cross-institutional peer-review of plans – in process,
4. Designing of ToT modules, development of training materials – in process.

All participants are reminded about the next week Quality Assurance and Monitoring Committee Meeting. Due to the fact that third activity is coordinator by the Manchester Metropolitan University, Karolina Kardas shortly explained it and said it is in the process. The last activity should be delivered by representatives from the University of Alba Iulia and it is in the process, since the first ToT session is planned for February 2018.

On the next slide of presentation, Selma talked about WORKPLAN for project year 2. In the table all activities were listed.

According to the plan, in January, process of introduction-adoption of changes in curricula should start. As well, accreditation process is planned to start in this month. In February, study visit to EU partner – Matej Bel University will be organized. Participants should start with ToT sessions, as well as with English language courses for teaching and administrative staff. Activities in March will be based on development of a handbook on student practice and development of ToT guidelines. In April will be first Quality Assurance and Monitoring Committee Meeting and the second one will be in December. In May will be first methodic/didactic seminar and should be started with the purchase of equipment. June and July are adjusted with less activities because of the holidays. In September will be the second methodic/didactic seminar and in October the second Steering Committee Meeting.

# TEACHER

Introducing competence - based preschool teacher education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
574076-EPP-1-2016-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

---

In the second part of presentation, Selma listed a proposal of dates for travels within the activities.

- Study Visit to EU partner – Matej Bel University, according to the project it was planned for January. But colleagues from Matej Bel University suggested that this is not good option and the study visit should be move for the next month. According to that, a proposal from project coordinator is 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 2018.
- 5 ToT sessions – which should be delivered by colleagues from University of Alba Iulia, should be on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February at the University of Mostar, the second session should be at the University of Alba Iulia on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of March, next one on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of May in Banja Luka, the fourth one on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of June in Travnik and the last one on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of September at the University of Tuzla.
- 2 methodic/didactic seminars – coordinated by representatives of Matej Bel University should be on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of May and the second one on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of September at Herzegovina University.
- Steering Committee Meeting will be on 30<sup>th</sup> of October at University of Bihac.

Participants are given a deadline until 27<sup>th</sup> of December to give a feedback regarding dates and proposals in order to discuss with other colleagues and members of their team within each institution.

Professor Amra Tuzovic started with her presentation. She discussed the financial issues and kindly asked all partners to act in accordance with the partnership agreement and Article 5.1. and 5.2. where the procedure and schedule of transferring funds to users is specified. It is stated that the second installment for travel costs and costs of stay (the first one is realized) for the period from September to December 2017 will be paid in the first week of September, provided that the user has provided all the documentation.

For staff costs it is stated that transfer of funds will be made twice a year, July and December, within 15 days of receipt of complete documentation, provided that the user sent all necessary

# TEACHER

Introducing competence - based preschool teacher education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
574076-EPP-1-2016-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

---

documentation. If the documentation is not delivered, the payment will be postponed for the next period.

Partners who provided documentation within the foreseen deadline are paid, for partners who provided the necessary documentation after the envisaged time for travel costs (September) and staff cost (July), payments will be made when the third installment is scheduled for travel costs or the second installment for staff costs, provided that the documentation is complete. She kindly asked participants to consider all of the above mentioned and to keep in the mind the terms and conditions of the contract as a rule for financial procedures.

Regarding Equipment all partners were reminded again to send their proposal of equipment if they want to change it.

Since the project foresees that in the second year the procedures for accreditation of the curriculum of pre-school education at the partner higher education institutions in BH, which are in the project, professor Amra Tuzovic opened the issue of accreditation of study programs and the current situation when Bosnia and Herzegovina is concerned.

Professor Amra explained to the EU partners, in front of the partner institutions from BiH, what kind of situation is in higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The problems that exist are very complex and constrained by higher education institutions because there is no system developed at the state level and there is no central action and unified approach.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a complex country which, according to the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, consists of the Entities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (51% of the territory) and Republika Srpska (49% of the territory). The Brčko District, which was the subject of a dispute and international arbitration, was declared as a district, so that the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two entities and the Brcko District. According to this arrangement, each entity has its own legislation and jurisdiction, making the complete apparatus very complex and specific. There are 10 cantons

# TEACHER

Introducing competence - based preschool teacher education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
574076-EPP-1-2016-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

---

in the Entity of the Federation and each Canton has competencies and legalities, so the laws differ from Canton to Canton. In accreditation, the recommendation is provided by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Development of Higher Education, HEA, and the final opinion is given by the relevant ministry.

As well, there is a Higher Education Agency in the Republika Srpska which is responsible for accreditation procedures. This points to the conclusion that there is no single approach and legislation at the state level and that the accreditation procedures of the study program within the TEACHER project will be aligned with Cantonal Laws on Higher Education and will be led by each partner institution separately.

In order to present the goals and tasks of the TEACHER project and also to get the right information on the current situation regarding the commencement of accreditation of the study programs of higher education institutions in BiH, Professor Amra on behalf of the Steering Committee of the project TEACHER scheduled a meeting in HEA Agency, which was held immediately after meeting of the Steering Board.

It was agreed to present the project, its objectives and tasks at the meeting to determine the current situation regarding the launching of the accreditation process for study programs, to receive instructions from the HEA Agency and recommendations on further implementation of the project when it comes to accreditation.

All the participants agreed that conclusions from the HEA meeting should be entered in the Minutes of the Steering Board.

Meeting was finished at 12.00 am and participants went to the Agency for Higher Education (HEA), where they already arranged a meeting with director. The Headquarter of HEA is actually based in Banja Luka and participants used this opportunity to visit the Agency and discuss the project activities, as well as the accreditation process.

# TEACHER

Introducing competence - based preschool teacher education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
574076-EPP-1-2016-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

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On behalf of the Agency for Higher Education and Quality Assurance, in meeting participated Deputy Director sir Slobodan Stanic and Irena Sisko and other representatives of the Management Cabinet, Sector for Quality Assurance and Sector for Development of Higher Education.

Professor Amra Tuzovic addressed the audience on behalf of the TEACHER Project Team. She presented a project, aims, outcomes and outputs. As well, she mentioned that project should start with accreditation process next year and that we are at the end of preparation for this process.

Sir Slobodan Stanic that they are very satisfied with this meeting, our presentation and what so far was done. Our project is on a right track and we should continue work on the same way. However, a story about accreditation of study programs is present here in Bosnia and Herzegovina but it has not yet begun. HEA officially entered a process of accreditation in 2012 but only institutional accreditation. However, a next step is accreditation of study programs, but officially that process has not yet begun in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Approximately in eight days, they will have a Steering Committee Meeting within the Agency to discuss this issue and will require a statement on all documents. If there are any changes or advancements, they will inform us. At the end of the meeting it was concluded that Brussels should be notified about the situation. It is necessary to explain that the accreditation of the study program cannot currently be implemented because the accreditation of study program has not been initiated in Bosnia and Herzegovina at all.

After extensive discussion, the following conclusions were made:

1. In the work program of the project for the 2nd year, the activity related to the Approval / Licensing Process (5.1), will be moved to the third year due to the fact that the procedure for accreditation of study programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not started yet its legal regulation.

# TEACHER

Introducing competence - based preschool teacher education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
574076-EPP-1-2016-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

---

2. A Letter of Intent will be sent to Brussels indicating the reasons for moving this activity and requesting approval for the current situation. In a letter of intent to explain the overall situation of all higher education institutions in BH, the reasons for the situation as well as the possibilities and expectations of the same.
3. Officially contact HEA with a letter stating the realization of the visit, the conclusions of the discussion and the request for continuity in co-operation between the Project Steering Board and the HEA so that they can plan the dynamics of the implementation of the activities that will be moved.
4. To carry out the curriculum innovation, as foreseen by the project, all but accreditation, which implies the enrollment of the new generation of students by the new curriculum, which should be accredited in the third year of the project, if the accreditation processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina receive their procedures and start running.
5. If the process of accreditation of study programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not receive its procedures in the third year of the project, the Steering Board of the Project TEACHER is obliged to find solutions that will lead to the achievement of the project objectives and will not allow the implementation of the project to be negatively assessed.

On 14.12.2017. in Banja Luka

**Minute taker: Selma Seta**