**SC & QAC Meeting of the Erasmus+ project**

**586304-EPP-1-2017-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP**

**25/01/2021**

**Western Balkans Urban Agriculture Initiative – BUGI**

**Agenda**

09:55 – 10:00 On-line registration

10:00 – 10:05 Welcome (Prof. Dr. Pakeza Drkenda, Project Coordinator)

10:05 – 10:30 Information about project activities between two meetings (October 23, 2020 – January 23, 2021)

10:30 – 11:30 Discussion on project implementation

• Enrolment of students

• LLL activities

• Monitoring report UDG

• Equipment purchase

11:30 – 12:00 Meeting conclusions

12:00 Closure of the meeting

**Minutes**

Prof. Pakeza Drkenda had opened the meeting and had welcomed all participants.

Prof. Pakeza Drkenda informed all participants about an email received from regional project adviser Mrs. Moro where she points up that project partners from the western Balkans did not succeed in the enrollment of students in the master study UA program which is the main milestone of the project. Because of that Project will be evaluated as poor with bad performance and that can cause financial penalties for the coordinator. It was planned to enroll 10 or more students at each university in one generation. So the meeting is organized in order to find solutions for this problem before the next report has been sent. It must be taken very seriously because if the partners fail in the fulfillment of tasks consortium will be punished with financial penalties.

The Rector of the University of Sarajevo was informed about this situation and he had taken phone calls to rectors from the University of Donja Gorica and the University of Prishtina in order to motivate them in fulfilling the tasks from the project. This is also related to other activities such as money transfer for the partners, equipment purchasing, etc. So every partner needs to create a timetable of activities with data and specific dates, deadlines for the fulfillment of those activities. Every partner must take this situation very seriously because the project is in a difficult state at moment.

Urban Agriculture study program at the University of Donja Gorica, University of Peja, and the University of Prishtina were successfully accredited but institutions failed to enroll students in the new academic year 20/21.

The University of Sarajevo had two tenders for computer equipment and both tenders failed, purchasing of sensors and softcovers applications had been successful.

The University of Peja had finished the reparation of the greenhouse which was destroyed by bad weather conditions and University Džemal Bijedić also had repaired their own greenhouse which is also has been destroyed by bad weather conditions.

The University of Donja Gorica has been finally successfully finished the tender for the greenhouse, and chosen company will install it soon. Regarding this information about the accreditation of the study program, the University of Donja Gorica got accreditation in July 2020, therefore, according to internal procedures at the University of Donja Gorica they could not enroll students in September because the first public call for students enrollment application had been in June 2020. So, now it is planned to perform enrollment od students in academic 21/22 year in June and University of Donja Gorica will have first students in June at this program, minimum five students.

The University of Prishtina is determined to work for the continuation of this project, especially because this MA program should be an important program for the University and Kosovo too, unfortunately, the University of Prishtina has some regulation about forming groups, which can not be formed with less than 10 students. The problem is that this time we had only 8 student candidates who were interested.

Prof. Nikolić suggested to participants to think about the new reality in which we are, where are online teaching is an option. Maybe to think about that your 8 students can be enrolled and be part of teaching in Sarajevo or anywhere else. We can join together and bring together teaching.

This program is accreditated for two years in Kosovo and the University of Prishtina should promote it in order to gain more students interested in this MA program. The University will work on internal regulation to terminate the total number of students for forming groups. So, in the future, we will be enabled to enroll students and create smaller groups, especially in a case like this.

It has been understood the problem was not on the Faculty level than on the University level and management needs to be involved in resolving this situation. All partners had signed an agreement with the EU and we must obey their rules. The University of Prishtina and the University of Peja need to start with the promotion of this program, as fast as possible. One of the possibilities can be to allow students to be enrolled in two study programs. Find a way how to attract the students and enroll them in the Urban Agriculture study program. At the last meeting, we were informed that the University of Prishtina and the University of Peja will organize together UA study program for students because of their capacities. So, did these two universities took action to attract students and did they promote this program enough in order to enroll enough students.

Prof. Gashi repeated that the University of Prishtina has internal regulation that says that groups can be formed with 10 or more students, and they had only 8 interested students. The new call will be open next September and we are sure that we will have enough interested students for forming groups in the study program, and people who are involved in this program will promote this program. The University of Prishtina will do that in order to have enough students. They are working with the steering committee to change regulation in order to allow the University to make groups with less than 10 students. We could not do it before because our mandate started in October last year.

Prof. Šabanac presented the part of the message from Mrs. Moro where is clear that each university should enroll up to 10 students, so we had to have 20 students last year in Prishtina because the University of Prishtina and the University of Peja had decided to have one common study program which is realized by the University of Prishtina. It was written 5 students each year and 10 in total for the project, so we needed 20 students in the last year of the project enrolled in the UA program. It means that both institutions should work hard to get these 20 students, it could be 15 from Prishtina and 5 from Peja and that is OK, we just need 20 students from Kosovo enrolled in this program. So if we don’t reach this number, changing regulation to have less number of students will doesn’t mean for us, it is ok that you can have 5 students in the group but overall we need 20 students from Kosovo, 10 students from the University of Donja Gorica and 10 from Sarajevo. The University of Sarajevo currently has enrolled 12 students which are 2 more than was written in the project, but we only have one student at the University of Džemal Bijedić which is also a big problem, we need 9 additional students from Mostar.

Let's just have clear situation because there is 5 Western Balkans institution and it was written at least 10 students per institution, it means 50 students in all and now we have 13 students overall, and we need 37 students more.

Prof. Mentor explained that is a problem for every new program, not just for the UA program, students are afraid to enroll in the new study program and they're more willing to enroll in current programs. So they need to change regulation in maters of total numbers of students in study programs, and that will encourage the students to enroll in the new program.

The University of Peja has all information that we have, and they knew all about this, the University of Peja has a little number of students in BA programs so it is difficult for them to have the students in MA programs.

Prof. Šabanac points up that partners need to promote the program through various activities and partners should have a plan of promotion. If we had promoted the program enough we would have enough students and we shouldn't need to promote it additionally. Another problem is that the University of Gorica did not run any public call for application in this program, so we don’t know how many students are interested in this program University. There are also findings in the report of the National Erasmus+ office of Montenegro in which this institution will be more involved in the promotion of this program. This is the result of the low promotion of our project and this program. If we do more in promotion of the program we will be more successful in enrollment of the students and reaching the number of the students. The main issue is will we have enough time because the end of the project is 14 October this year. If we publish the call in September I am not sure will we be successful until October 14 because we have to report the numbers of our students in the final reports. So we need to promote the program immediately and think about opening a call in June so we can report in September that we will have a generation of students and a number of those students. So our aim to have 25 to 30 students to enroll at least 15 students per institution. Let's think about have to enroll 20, 30 students, not 8, our goal must be higher. Sarajevo currently has 12 students and there will be the new calls and we expect 3 to 5 new students so the University of Sarajevo will have 7 to 8 more students which means that partners can have 7 to 8 fewer students. We should reach many 50 students in total, so everybody needs to think about that.

Prof. Bytyqi said that the main goal of the project, for partner s universities, is to run this new UA master study program. In order to make them, accredited them, enroll the students, etc. If partners don’t succeed, the EU will punish the consortium and also partners will be also blacklisted. All partners need to have into consideration what is necessary to do in order to complete these tasks successfully.

It was concluded that the partners from Kosovo and the University of Donja Gorica need to create full and detailed reports about the accreditation of the program which caused the problem with postponing activities. That will be a good justification to show clearly how the whole process is time-consuming and complicated.

The accreditation of the LLL program is one of the core project expected results and the inability to complete this deliverable is quite a concern. If the LLL program is considered unrealistic and not feasible for the University of Donja Gorica, the local project coordinator should prepare a clear and justified explanation for that, elaborating in detail on the reasons behind it and inform the responsible project officer.

Both reports will be used to justify why we late in enrolling the students.

As a consortium, we have to prepare an extra file with an explanation, if partners from Prishtina and Peja prepare their files, in which we convince the international commission to be reasonable regarding obstacles.

I propose to partners to sent those files in the next few days because there will be two hours meeting with Mrs. Moro and the representatives of the national Erasmus office from these three countries and it is on 5 February. We have to present some concrete proposals for that meeting and I really ask both partners from Montenegro and Kosovo to send us these reports, reports about the process of accreditation which causes the delay in enrollment of students. Another issue is reported from the national Erasmus office in Montenegro, and we are given two weeks' time making reference to challenges that are highlighted in the report. I ask partners from Montenegro to clarify the situation and to prepare answers for the issues raised in this report because we will have a national Erasmus officer present et meeting and we will have to discuss this report with them too.

It was suggested to partners to provide clear answers that are including the numbers, facts, dates, timetable, etc. Also when they are describing the process of accreditation, they need to describe its details in sense of time frame, just to support the statement that partners did all they could to complete the tasks.

Prof. Šabanac informs us about the punishment we can get if we don’t succeed with tasks. If we will be penalized, the lowest penalty is a 25% reduction of the total grant for poor implementation, we should concrete actions on how to reach the point in which we don’t be penalized.

Prof. Bernd suggested that the consortium should make a good strategy on how to avoid punishment, financial penalties and not be on a blacklist in Brussels. It is good information that we have accreditation done. LLL program is placed in a high role in the project.

Prof. Pakeza informs us that the University of Sarajevo sent together with the SEDRA LLL program for accreditation, the process will take one month, after that the University is planning to enroll the first participants. The partners from Kosovo and Montenegro should at least develop the LLL program besides the accreditation process.

Prof. Nikolić explained the University of Sarajevo introducing the practice of micro credit-issuing at the University, the project gave us the opportunity and support to issue that and to start a totally new practice that we didn’t have in this shape. Participants will get a certificate which will be valuable with ECTS credits, something like a diploma supplement. This is something with which we can justify to ourselves that we are doing our best to implement this project.

If the University of Donja Gorica finds it unrealistic or doesn’t feasible then the project coordinator in collaboration with the local project coordinator should make a clear justified explanation for that and we also need to offer the solution for that problem. So do solution is that people from Montenegro can attend our classes at LLL and that we will suggest being done.

The quality of partnership will be evaluated by external evaluators, the consortium can be described as a bad partnership and we can be punished for weakness as a project consortium.

Till the end of this month until the android application will be finished Prof. Pakeza calls partners from Kosovo and Montenegro to send her all contacts, addresses, and websites of farmers who are interested in this application, at least 10 per institution. It will be organizing the presentation of this app together with the company that made it, and it will be at the end of January.

Prof. Šabanac proposed to partners from Kosovo and Montenegro to send written explanations about the points raised today during this meeting and points raised by the monitoring visit at the University of Donja Gorica by Friday. Then it will be good to have a new meeting, in the next Monday, it could be meeting with less number of a participant but with Giuseppina and Bernd in order to help us about report and meeting in February. The idea is also to ask Mrs. Moro because she offered us few seats extra for the meeting, maybe to ask for one EU partner to be present and one additional partner from Western Balkans to be present at the meeting.

It will be Prof. Božović from the University of Donja Gorica will be present at the meeting, and prof. Bernd also can participate in the meeting.

Partners from Kosovo and Montenegro to send by Friday clarification on the situation and Montenegro could send the bullet points from the report from Montenegro, prof. Božović could prepare answers for highlighted parts of the report. We can discuss next Monday, at 10 o clock, what we will report to Mrs. Moro. Mr. Bernd and Mrs. Giuseppina can help us draft the report, we can make the first draft during the weekend based on replies from Kosovo and Montenegro. On Monday it will be redrafted with EU partners. The meeting will be scheduled only with coordinators.

A detailed table with the achieved and not achieved results, with precise explanations why, and a precise plan of activity with the timetable (open days, organize newsletter, etc.)

Prof. Pakeza will send the proposal to the rector and vice-rector of partners asking them to give their engagement to help us with the problem.

A list of questions with the draft Report can be sent on Mondy to Mrs. Moro.