

# PROJECT AS AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION FOR CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Projekts kā inovatīvs risinājums izmaiņām augstākajā izglītībā

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**Abstract.** *The article analyzes project as a method of innovative solution in higher education which may result in introducing gradual changes in the institutions of higher education. There is a universal opinion that universities are conservative institutions where changes are slow or they are not at all. Nowadays the emphasis of action changes and higher education institutions (hereafter in the text HEI) look for cooperation possibilities with the employers and the possible applicants; they try to get closer to the society by participating in social and economic changes that take place in the society and participate in developing the education policy and decision making. Implementation of projects in the higher education institution which involve the whole staff promotes the increase of the staff's competence and provide innovative solutions in the study process, develop a closer link among the project partners, state, municipality and non-governmental sector.*

**Keywords:** *changes, higher education institution, innovations, project.*

### Introduction

Nowadays during the time of rapid changes the state political and social economic processes alternate with changes in education. The continuous changes in all spheres of human activities, including education, have a direct influence on the functioning of the HEI. The processes going on in the higher education institution as an organization have to be in close interaction with changes taking place in the country, changes in the normative documents, political motions, changes in the social economic status, the change of paradigms in education and changes in the value system. Changes are the characteristic feature of development; they may be caused by reforms, innovations or unpredictable internal and external conditions. Changes in educational institutions or in the field of education are purposefully promoted to approximate the education process to a maximum degree to the society development trends. Mondy and Adams indicate that changes are a set of planned

and structured activities, which by involving the respective employees or their groups, are directed towards improving the work outcomes of the organization, facilitating the development and change in the staff's behaviour. (Mondy, Adams, 2002).

Changes in the contemporary society and economy put forward new requirements to the education system to achieve modern, qualitative and competitive education. This also indicates the inevitability of changes and reforms in the education system of Latvia (Changes in education. (2002) Education System Development Project, Ministry of Education).

The implementation of the ESF project “Developing and implementing support programs for establishing a support system for the youth under the social exclusion risk” (*Agreement Nr.2010/0328/IDP/1.2.2.4.1/10/IPIA/VIAA/002*) of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art, University of Latvia (hereafter in the text LU PPMF), is based on the strategic principles of “The strategy of Latvia’s sustainable development 2030” (Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030. (2011) The Latvian Parliament; Retrieved 12 March, 2012. from [http://www.nap.lv/upload/latvija2030\\_lv.pdf](http://www.nap.lv/upload/latvija2030_lv.pdf)), namely:

- *Creation*, which refers not only to culture and science but any sphere of social and economic life. Creation – the ability to create new ideas, concepts, methods, action forms or to link the existing ideas, concepts, methods and actions in a new way, in any profession and life sphere;
- *Tolerance*. The principle includes the openness and respect to different cultures and lifestyles.
- *Cooperation*. The sustainable model requires solving in an integrated way economic, environmental and social issues therefore both the vertical and horizontal cooperation mechanisms become especially important. In the conditions of globalization there is a need for institutional environment in which separate institutions are able to react and combine depending on the situation.
- *Participation* in order to balance the economic, social and environmental considerations there is a need for active participation of the whole society in the policy making process.

Fulan explains that educationalists can not do everything by themselves. We are speaking about the broadest objective of the society – to form a learning society. Changes should concentrate on all social institutions and their interaction while education has a special task – to be in the front and help to keep the right direction. (Fulans, 1999).

The authors of the article emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation in introducing changes in all spheres of human activities and in implementing reforms in education which is also proved by the implementation structure of the ESF project and the obtained results. The study carried out in Latvia “Schools of Latvia after 2009: changes just start?” (Latvian school after 2009: Change is just beginning? (2010) the President's Commission of Strategic

Analysis. Discussion report, Golubeva, M. Retrieved 10 March, 2012. from [http://otraiespeja.blogs.lv/files/2010/04/mg\\_latvijas\\_skolas\\_pc\\_2009\\_gada.pdf](http://otraiespeja.blogs.lv/files/2010/04/mg_latvijas_skolas_pc_2009_gada.pdf)) informs that so far those who plan education policy in Latvia when implementing changes in education looked at them as the cycles of reforms that will cease at some point reaching the final result. Such approach to policy making led to hasty and unqualified solutions. It is time to change the paradigm of reform cycles with the *paradigm of dual changes* which allows combining dynamically two approaches to the changes in education: bottom-up and top-down. One of the ways to introduce planned changes is the project method as an action which is a set of activities that takes place at a particular time and place, involves definite resources and is oriented to a definite result and aim. Projects differ both as regards their scope and length, the number and diversity of the participants; however, every project has its own unique content which is implemented and results that are obtained. A frequent problem in the education system of Latvia is that project results are used only within the project. Projects have their beginning and ending, the financial resources are used in a short period of time without ensuring the sustainability. The authors of the article emphasize that the involvement of participants in the implementation of the project has a significant importance, i.e., using the participants' competence in the respective field, their ability to adjust to changes, the ability to think creatively and to create, and involving to a maximum degree participants who are employed in the respective field in order to ensure the sustainability of the results after the project has finished. Implementation of several projects in one organization is effective introduction of changes that is defined as the project management method. Each project in its essence actually means changes regardless the planned results- creation of a new product or establishment of a respective situation. Program management method within one organization is used for the management and supervision of the change process. (Trevor, 2009; Sirkin, Keenan, Jackson, 2008).

Communication from the European Union Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities - Education, research and innovation" /\* COM/2006/0208 final \* Retrieved 10 February, 2012. from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0208:EN:NOT>) emphasizes that it is necessity to ensure the necessary conditions to allow universities to improve their work, to modernize the system and to become more competitive, namely, to become the leader of one's country's renewal and to participate in establishing the knowledge society.

The use of the resources provided by the European Union Structural funds in implementing projects in HEI is an effective contribution into the development of the organization, the possibility to improve and to create new values. The management of changes, in the understanding of implementing several projects in one organization, means also the change of people's attitude and the change of the organization's culture that largely depends on the manager and leaders of the organization, the project managers. People perceive changes differently, part of

them feels the necessity for changes, another part struggles against them in order to preserve the existing order, the existing opinions, status and habits.

Innovations in human life are a natural phenomenon though in the context of the organization's life it should be conscious and planned. Innovations are a way how to obtain and preserve leadership in the global market. All innovations are changes but not all changes are innovations. Innovation is a conscious and definite introduction of the novelty that is oriented towards more effective attainment of the organization's aims. (Adair, 2007).

Innovations are closely connected with the "warming of the country's economy in any branch". Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities - Education, research and innovation" /\* COM/2006/0208 final \* Retrieved 10 February, 2012. from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0208:EN:NOT>) mentions that HEI should acknowledge that research no longer is an isolated action and that research mainly is performed not by individual researchers but research groups and global research networks. The research environment of HEI becomes more competitive and global and demands more interaction that, in its turn, promotes the spread of the ideas and scientific growth on a broader scale. Thus it can be concluded that in order for the scientific thought to develop, the competitiveness of both the HEI and the state to increase, innovations to develop and to reach creative solutions to different problem situations none of the higher education institutions can live in isolation from other higher education institutions and other science fields. Also the University of Latvia in cooperation with 27 cooperation partners ([www.atbalsts.lu.lv](http://www.atbalsts.lu.lv); Retrieved 10 February, 2012. from <http://www.atbalsts.lu.lv/lv/sadarbibas-partneri>): *State Education Content centre, Ministry of Education and Science (VISC IZM); Liepāja University (LiepU); Rēzekne Higher education institution (RA); Latvia Sports pedagogy academy (LSPA); Daugavpils University (DU); Rīga Pedagogy and Education management academy (RPIVA); Latvian Christian academy (KA), 6 higher education institutions of Latvia); Municipality of Aglona region; Daugavpils municipality; Municipality of Garkalne region; Municipality of Iecava region; Municipality of Jelgava region; Municipality of Krāslava region; Liepāja municipality; Municipality of Preiļi region; Municipality of Rēzekne region; Rēzekne municipality; Rīga municipality; Municipality of Saldus region; Municipality of Skrunda region; Municipality of Smiltene region; Municipality of Valmiera region, (15 municipalities in 5 planning regions of Latvia and 25 pilot schools); Association – Parents' Union of Latvia „Parents for education, cooperation, progress”; Association of Children's psychiatrists of Latvia; Association of Social pedagogues of Latvia; Association of School psychologists of Latvia; Cooperation organization of people with special needs of Latvia "SUSTENTO", (5 cooperation partners representing the non-governmental sector); UNESCO National Committee of Latvia also participated in the implementation of the project has taken upon itself such a role applying for the*

ESF project “Developing and implementing support programs for establishing a support system for the youth under the social exclusion risk”, involving the staff of the HEI, students, municipality officials, school directors, teachers and parents. The invitation of the Ministry of Education and Science to HEI to participate in preparing a project under the ESF activity 1.2.2.4.1 “Developing inclusive education and a support system for the youth under the social exclusion risk, training and ensuring the necessary staff and increasing their competence” (IZM VAAA, Retrieved 10 February, 2012. from [http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/strukturfondi/vispareja\\_izglitiba/vispizgliitiiba\\_apakshl/?tl\\_id=334&tls\\_id=446](http://www.viaa.gov.lv/lat/strukturfondi/vispareja_izglitiba/vispizgliitiiba_apakshl/?tl_id=334&tls_id=446)) was a tremendous challenge because it envisages carrying out structural and systemic changes in the existing interdisciplinary system involving in the implementation of the project different level state, municipality and non-governmental organizations.

The ESF supported project “Developing and implementing support programs for establishing a support system for the youth under the social exclusion risk” was started in 2011; its direct aim is to explore, model, approbate and evaluate a system for decreasing and preventing social exclusion risks for young people aged 13-25 in 15 municipalities to lessen the social exclusion risks and the number of young people who drop out from school and do not continue their education as well as to promote their vocation related education and employment, to strengthen the capacity of the involved institutions, to develop the support system and increase the competence of the staff involved in the project.

The article reflects the results of the pilot study on the intentions and attitude of the ESF participants to changes, innovations and values in the HEI and in the project and their readiness to introducing changes in their institution and on the state level.

### **Participants of the pilot study**

Participants of the pilot study were 32 participants of the seminar (the seminar of the 1.1. Sub-activity “Development of the methodology for exploring the situation, the analysis and summary of the results”) all of whom are connected with education or social sphere which was organized in the project “Developing and implementing support programs for establishing a support system for the youth under the social exclusion risk”.

### **Instruments and procedure of the study**

Original survey questionnaire with closed and open questions was developed for the pilot study. It helped to obtain demographic data about the respondents' gender, age, length of service, education, institution of work and position; the open questions allowed the respondents to express openly their opinion about different issues connected with the project and socially topical issues which are analyzed by the authors of the article further in the article. The obtained results were summarized and responses analyzed using the principles of content analysis. Respondents filled in the questionnaires during the project seminar; the questionnaires were collected and processed in 2011. The authors distributed 32

questionnaires and the fact that they were filled in during the seminar guaranteed almost 100 per cent return; however, part of them was filled in insufficiently therefore questionnaires from 24 respondents were used for data analysis.

### **Results and discussion**

The scientific potential of the society, which is the chief resource for the development of the country, for the creation of new knowledge and education of new specialists, is concentrated in higher education institutions. As indicated in the Guidelines for the development of science and technologies in Latvia 2009-2013 (The Science and Technology Development Guidelines for 2009 to 2013, by the Cabinet Order Nr.631, Riga, 16.09.2009. (prot. Nr.54 35.§) Retrieved 10 January, 2012. from <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=3133>) knowledge and innovation are the chief resources for attaining the aims of the country's development.

Rector of the University of Latvia Auziņš M. expresses the opinion that many university academic staff members oppose the following – higher education institution is not business, higher education institutions does not create “products” and does not offer “services”. The higher education institution teaches and educates the young people and through research creates new knowledge. Only those HEI will be able to exist that will be able to combine high academic standard and academic freedom with the realities of the business world. (Auziņš, 2007).

The university faculty is a pedagogue and scientist combined. Scientific work for the university faculty is a necessary precondition for ensuring the effectiveness of the higher education study process as well for the link with the latest scientifically grounded developments. Thus one of the most essential functions of the HEI is training and education of creatively thinking specialists. (Vedins, 2011; McCaffery, 2004, Emabile (Amabile), 2007).

However, the managers' competence is to influence all the components of creativity: competence, creative thinking skills and motivation. It is important for the organization and project manager to understand which the management approaches are to influence the employees' creativity, i.e., challenge, freedom, resources, composition of the work group, encouragement of the immediate managers and the organizational support. (Amabil, 2007; Adair, 2007). Cooperation with the staff from 6 HEI of Latvia in performing joint studies and in designing the support program opens wider possibilities for carrying out common scientifically grounded studies and for creating new research instruments. The cooperation with 15 municipalities of Latvia in establishing the support system, which involves not only the administration of the municipality but also the institutions under its supervision, provides the HEI a possibility to understand better the situation in different municipalities; at the same time it allows the staff of the HEI to give their contribution in the development of the local municipality by offering both the methodological support and different solutions to solving particular problem situations. The role of municipalities is essential if we want to introduce changes on a broader scale, for they are considered the foundation of any democratic system and the more developed the municipalities are the greater democracy is in the country thus the University of Latvia started cooperation with

the municipalities within the above mentioned project to promote the introduction of innovative solutions directly in the municipalities and in schools that are in their subordination. The implementation of the ESF interdisciplinary project (pedagogy, psychology, education management) involves not only partners from other organizations but also professionals from different fields within one faculty thus forming a synergy among them. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities - Education, research and innovation. \*COM/2006/0208 final\* Retrieved 10 February,2012. from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0208:EN:NOT>) stresses that universities should overcome the disintegration into faculties, departments, laboratories and administrative units and should combine forces to solve institutional priorities connected with research, teaching and services.

Theory of economics has proved and widely uses the synergy effect. The idea that the action of the people's group that is organized around a definite aim and strategy can provide considerably higher results than the individual who acts on his own. (Garleja, Vidnere, 2000).

Of 24 respondents who have indicated their position and the type of institution six work in the education board of the municipality, 14 work in an educational institution (teachers, directors, deputy directors, social pedagogues), two are representatives of higher education institutions, four represent non-governmental organizations and one comes from the social services of the municipality. The respondents' average age is 43. In the total number of respondents (N=24) who have indicated their education 14 have master's degree and 1 – Doctor's degree; others have indicated that they have higher education in one of the following fields- pedagogy, social pedagogy, psychology, philology, in one of the teacher education programs, in a science program. The respondents' average length of service in the indicated profession is 14 years and the maximum length of service in pedagogy is 48 years and the minimum-0.5 years.

Respondents' opinion concerning their interest in participation in the project falls into two large groups where one group is those who were delegated by the administration and the other who were interested in the process. As respondents answering this question could expand their reply then part of the first group wrote that initially they were delegated by the administration but now they were interested in the process.

Human resources, people's mutual relations, the personality development, values and conviction, which create the sense of belonging to the organization and the content idea of the project, play a significant role in the activities of the educational institutions and project groups.

Table 1

**The four quadrants of any human system**

	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
<i>Individual</i>	Personality	Character

	Personal values and beliefs	Personal behaviour
<i>Collective</i>	Culture Group values and beliefs	Social structure Group behaviour

Barrett states that these quadrants developed by Ken Wilber correspond to four aspects of any human system: Interior individual - interpreting people's interior experiences – personal values and beliefs; Exterior individual – personal behaviour and actions; Collective interior – the collective consciousness of a society, or plurality of people; Collective exterior – collective social structure; its systems, processes and behaviour.

When people's beliefs and values change, so does their behaviour. If a sufficient number of people change their values and behaviour in the same direction, reaching critical mass, their collective behaviour and values change too. The implementation of change in organizations or societies on all four levels is known as the transformation or conversion of the whole system. It is important to define the territory of personal or collective consciousness so it can be consciously developed. It follows that by consciously managing the values of an organization it is possible to encourage a shift to higher levels of consciousness. (Barrett, 2008)

Respondents answering the question about the values they consider important in the higher education institution mentioned as the most characteristic- quality of education, openness to challenges, mutual cooperation (university teacher – student), creative, education based on students' self-initiative, responsibility, precision, purposefulness, respect, understanding.

Values that respondents mentioned as important in the project were that teachers delved into the peculiarities of pupils' personality, got acquainted with the work of other organizations under the municipality's supervision, accumulation of experience, gaining new ideas, interest in searching solutions to problems, promoting the cooperation: researchers- municipalities- teachers- pupils- parents- other institutions, etc., designing a real, applicable instrument at the end of the project.

The society values interact with the values of each organization as the personal values of each individual interact with the values of the organization. Often personal values do not agree with the organizational values which results in a conflict. Each organization has values generally accepted by all its employees. There are values that are known or even described and there are values that are not formally fixed but are very important. We can refer this also to the implementation of the project, and it is important that the values of the project participants agree with the values of the project and taking into consideration the broad cooperation partnership in the project it is crucial to agree on common understanding in the implementation of the project. Adair states that 50 per cent of motivation is within the people as a reply to internal needs, urges and values; the other 50 per cent depend on the environment around us, especially the leadership in it. (Adair, 1999).



Respondents answering the question - *Which, to your mind, could be innovations in the higher education institution? Do they correspond to what is needed in your institution?*

Gave the following answers, for example:

- *Innovations should not be linked with the development of technologies but stabilization of the able-norms of the civilization. Innovations are an effective way for attaining the social aims of the higher education institution and Europe. It is a complex everyday work of strategy management;*
- *Creativity, innovations should be the basis of every pedagogue's work; if the pedagogue is flexible, tended to "+" changes, pupils will feel it and will be more motivated and feel more belonging;*
- *The self-assessment skill with the desire to change in order to manage the change processes.*

Despite the representation of the respondents' different professions the emphasis is laid on the necessity of innovative solutions in everyday work, which acknowledges the necessity of changes in all levels and structures. Besides, it is stressed that innovations in the higher education institution should not be linked with the development of the information technologies but more with the self-assessment skill with the desire to change, thus there is orientation to human resources – the willingness to change and the management of the change process.

The question – *Do you believe in yourself that you are able to introduce changes in your environment and together with the project participants on the state level?*

*What, to your mind, is needed to achieve this?* – received the following answers:

- *Yes, I believe! Action research – argumentation – discussions with the municipality, school, teachers (persuading) – introduction of changes in the environment. Everything depends on personnel;*
- *Yes, definitely - I am already doing it;*
- *I consider that the project will be able to introduce changes. We need the skill to trust the colleagues' professionalism. Only team work will introduce changes in life;*
- *Believe ~ 70% of implementation.*

Respondents were asked about their readiness and capacity for changes: *Facing a new situation in life you would try to solve it and connect it with your experience* where the mean is 5.30, standard deviation is 0.535 and dispersion is 0.286, which indicates that the greatest part of respondents is ready to different solutions of the problem situations.

Respondents were offered to choose also other statements about their action when facing a new situation in life – to link it with the experience of other people, or to find a new, untraditional solution but the most convincing answers were received about relying on one's personal experience and it indicates the importance of each individual's personally accumulated experience and its significant role in making different decisions.

This makes us think about the necessity to stress the practical activities more in the educational process (in different levels) to acquire this experience, certainly, not excluding the possibility to learn from others and to synthesize ideas in order to make untraditional decisions. Creative thinking is a way how people solve problems; it is the ability to combine the existing ideas in new combinations. This ability largely depends on the personality as well as his thinking and actions. (Amabile, 2007).

Creativity is closely connected with the ability to adjust to changes, flexibility and freedom in thoughts and opinions.

Respondents had to answer the question –*To what extent do you contribute to the development of your organization? Please, provide an example*–and gave such answers as:

- *I give profound contribution; I resign from what I like to devote myself to the idea and to motivate others to common benefits because an educated man is value; it is worth devoting your life to it;*
- *I polish the image of the organization through my participation, without asking any rewards in this process;*
- *I like to search, to find out, to offer innovative solutions to problems, regulations in education, but sometimes the creative, innovative lacks resources and support;*
- *Definite working hours are not enough; I have to work longer to achieve better results.*

The answers to great extent indicate the respondents' willingness to act but often this action takes place on the account of the teachers' health and material wellbeing, which causes the dissatisfaction with the profession, which in its turn, can influence the professional's work.

The action of any institution – society, enterprise, corporation, state or municipality institution, including higher education institutions, the structural unit of any organization consists of the interaction of several processes, constant exchange of information between the elements of the organization, decision making and coordination of implementation, etc.

Organizations, including higher education institutions that function during the transition process have to face several internal and external problems that the organizations of developed countries do not have. Several factors that create these problems can be mentioned- unpredictable politically economic environment, weak alignment in the regulating sphere, external uncontrollable influence, sometimes the skeptical attitude of people to any changes, their unwillingness to follow the new and support the on-going processes. The latter problem can be partly explained with the inability of many people to react quickly to changes and to adjust to them due to insufficient knowledge and qualification. The implementation of projects in the HEI forms a platform for successful changes.

Europe needs universities that are able to develop their strengths and diversity the action on the basis of these strengths. (Communication from the

Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities - Education, research and innovation/\* COM/2006/0208 final \* Retrieved 10 February,2012. from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0208:EN:NOT>).

When HEI participate in up-taking the EU structural funds, they involve their staff in it and the project results bring innovations also in the study process thus promoting the development. Preparation of innovative projects and attracting financial resources to the higher education institution is one of the ways how to introduce innovative solutions and create changes in the HEI that would help to change and improve the current situation in the HEI as well as to change the staff's attitude. Starting from 2005 – 2012 the faculty of Education, Psychology and Art, University of Latvia, has implemented 7 European Structural Fund projects. ESF projects promote interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity; the university has to prove their significance, especially in connection with research, by sharing the knowledge with the society and strengthening the dialogue with all interested parties. There is a need for communication among the specialists in science and non-specialists which is often lacking. The implementation of the project is like an interaction with the world and the university action on the whole is equally actualized.

Excellence emerges in the conditions of competition and it is mainly developed on the scale of the faculty/department; only few universities achieve excellence in a large spectrum of fields. Greater competition as well as more active mobility and further concentration of resources would allow universities and partners of the respective field offer more open and complicated work environment to the most talented students and researchers thus increasing their good fame both among the inhabitants of Europe and outside Europe's boundaries. (Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities - Education, research and innovation" /\* COM/2006/0208 final \* Retrieved 10 February, 2012. from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0208:EN:NOT>).

### **Conclusions**

- Projects as innovative solutions in the improvement of the study process and academic work as well as the cooperation possibilities with the employers and the would-be applicants as the result of implementing the projects provide a possibility to get closer to the society because they promote a closer interaction with changes in the country, changes in the normative documents, political motions to bring the education process as much as possible to the society development trends.
- Implementation of projects in the higher education institution, especially the implementation of several projects at the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art, University of Latvia, and the involvement of the staff is an effective introduction of changes that ensures gradual introduction of changes and is

closely connected with the development of the HEI and the increase of the staff's competence to provide the environment in the HEI for educating creatively thinking specialists.

- The implementation of the ESF project “Developing and implementing the support systems for establishing a support system for youth under the social exclusion risk” and the obtained results are based on the strategic principles of “The strategy of Latvia’s sustainable development 2030” *Creation, Tolerance, Cooperation, Participation* that confirm the sustainability of the project results by solving the education, economy, environment and social issues in an integrated way and taking into account the vertical and horizontal cooperation mechanisms.
- The interinstitutional cooperation environment is formed during the implementation of the ESF project in which separate institutions will be able to react and unite depending on the situation, which will result in an increased possibility to develop a learning society.
- The data of the pilot study reveal that the majority of respondents have the length of service in pedagogy that extends over many years thus also huge experience in education which gives validity to the thesis that a successful implementation of the projects depends on the competence of the project management and the professionals involved in the project and their action will result in informed formation of the collective consciousness about the project values and convictions thus introducing changes in the definite structures-organizations or any social structures, systems, processes, actions and behaviour.
- Respondents consider that the most important values in the higher education institution and project are being interested and cooperation among the participants of the process as well as creativity and openness to new challenges that largely depends on the coordination of values of the HEI and project management, the leaders and the employees.
- Respondents in their answers confirm the importance of human resources in the introduction of changes and emphasize the belief in oneself, the skill to substantiate, persuade and the trust in colleagues’ professionalism as the most essential, which is confirmed in the theory that people’s mutual relations, the personality development, values and convictions that form the sense of belonging to the organization and the content idea of the project have an essential role in the performance of educational institutions and project groups.
- The respondents’ data reveal that the necessary innovations in the higher education institution should be mainly oriented to the change of the attitude of human resources and establishing conditions for the creativity and developing the self-assessment skills with the desire to change in order to manage the change processes.
- Majority of respondents are ready for different solutions of the problem situations mainly acting on the basis of their experience, not connecting their

action with the experience of other people and do not try to seek new, untraditional solutions that on the ground of theory could decrease the ability to adjust to changes, flexibility and freedom in thoughts and opinions.

- The data of the pilot study prove the respondents' interest and willingness to invest their work in the development of their organization; however, it requires the investment of time and effort outside their working hours. Participation in the project is the implementation of the set of coordinated actions in accordance with the project aims and objectives thus the respondents have a possibility to perform innovative solutions coordinating their working hours, which facilitates the participants' satisfaction with their work.
- ESF projects, especially cross-disciplinary projects form a synergy among the fields not only within one organization but also promote interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, which is particularly important in connection with the research because there is a need for communication among the specialists in science and non-specialists which is often lacking. The implementation of the project is like an interaction with the world and the university action on the whole is equally actualized.

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