

INTERFACE CENTER PILOT FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD

State of the art - the problem:

The University of Novi Sad (UNS) is a functionally integrated university - it comprises of 14 faculties with the status of legal entities. Each faculty has already developed a set of workshops, lectures, courses and other kinds of organized training, offered in a framework of lifelong learning (LLL) at that specific faculty. Consequently, parties interested in LLL, as a way of continuous knowledge acquisition and/or skills development have to visit different information sources (faculties' web sites, career counseling or LLL offices at faculties, etc.) in order to inform themselves about current LLL offer, conditions and possibilities of attendance, and other relevant information. Furthermore, faculties do not cooperate in a sufficient extent with each other when creating new LLL courses and consequently redundancies in their offer or overlapping in courses' realization time may occur, resulting in reduced number of attendants, due to their dispersion. In addition, faculties are neither involved in analysis of attendants' satisfaction with the quality of LLL courses and diversity of existent offer, nor in the research of future needs in the area of LLL.

Purpose:

The purpose of the INTERFACE center (IC) pilot is the following:

- integration: to collect and present all LLL possibilities available at the UNS to everybody interested in this kind of knowledge acquisition, independently from the faculty that conducts the LLL activity.
- harmonization: to enable better planning and development of LLL courses across faculties
- support: to enrich and broaden the LLL services offer at faculties in terms of their content and methodology, and to leverage the quality of LLL courses
- dissemination: to promote LLL and conduct marketing activities at the university level, to support harmonized marketing activities at faculties and provide uniform visibility,
- quality assurance: provide feedback on user satisfaction and matching of LLL courses with the needs of students, enterprises, governance bodies, professional organizations, etc.

Activities:

The INTERFACE center LLL pilot should be realized through the following activities:

1. Formation of a team that will work on the realization of this pilot project
This team should consist of one university representative, one contact person in charge of LLL, one person responsible for PR, and one person responsible for a Web page design and on-line questionnaires.
2. Collecting data on different LLL courses faculties have been offered
The UNS representative will send, on behalf of the university, a circular letter to all faculties, explaining the pilot and asking them to provide information on their specific LLL activities and existing courses offered at each institution. A uniform electronic questionnaire form for providing the asked information will be sent to all faculties.
3. Design and implementation of an up-to-date database on LLL offer across the 14 faculties at the UNS

Upon the responses received from the faculties, the relevant LLL courses' data (title, type - workshop, lecture, course, training, lecturer information, target group, number of attendants, competences acquired, duration, frequency, attendance fee, etc.) will be stored into a unique data base.

4. Development of an on-line web interface for updating, searching and querying purposes.

In parallel with database implementation, an on-line web interface will be developed and posted on IC's web page, providing insight into all LLL courses offered at UNS.

5. Designing and printing a catalog of LLL courses at the UNS.

The IC should unify and organize the collected faculty specific data and information on LLL into a comprehensive, consistent collection and present it in a uniform way in a printed catalog (1000 pcs.) and an on-line catalog posted on the UNS web-page.

6. Dissemination of the catalog and promotion of LLL courses

The IC should disseminate the published catalog to stakeholders and inform them that there is an on-line version at UNS's web page.

A promotion campaign will be organized at each faculty, where an IC stand will be set up and volunteers will distribute the LLL courses catalog and disseminate information on on-line version and web search options.

7. Evaluation of user satisfaction upon the LLL course ending

The on-line questionnaire on the IC's web site should serve as a quality assurance feedback mechanism. Along with the printed catalog, the IC will distribute a note that asks all attendants of LLL courses to visit the IC's web site and fill in the posted on-line questionnaire concerning the quality of attended LLL courses.

8. Posting the evaluation results on IC's web page and their dissemination to faculties in order to react and improve their future LLL activities.

9. Preliminary analysis of needs and interest in prosperous LLL courses

The on-line questionnaire on the IC's web site should have some questions concerning missing knowledge and skills still needed after formal education completion, in diversified pool of LLL courses users. The results should be disseminated by IC to service providers and integrated into future services offered, as well as into existing curricula in order to improve overall educational services.

Expected results:

1. The unique database of LLL courses offered at all 14 faculties at the UNS
2. Printed catalog of LLL courses issued by the UNS and in electronic format, posted on IC's web site. All stakeholders in Vojvodina will be informed about existent LLL courses.
3. Search options available: in search for information, all interested (active and finished students, employers, employed and unemployed people, local governance structures, etc.) could easily find information through a Web interface.
4. Avoidance of courses' realization time overlapping and dispersion of attendants to courses offered simultaneously
5. Invariably high quality of services offered at 14 different faculties

6. Better match between needs for LLL courses and the actual offer

Risks:

- low response of faculties and/or stakeholders

Time frame:

The pilot will be realized from November 2012 till May 2013, as displayed in Table 1.

Action	2012				2013			
	November				January	February	March	April
Formation of a team								
Collecting data on LLL								
Database design								
On-line web interface								
Printing a catalog								
Catalog dissemination								
Evaluation of user satisfaction								
Preliminary analysis of needs								
Posting the evaluation results								