

Report of the interviews made with Russian and Kazakh partner university teams in EduEnvi

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Interviews with partner universities from Kazakhstan and Russia were organized on March 2020 after piloting of the online courses was finished. The reason for organizing the interviews was to analyze the pilots and make reflection on what has been learned so far in the project. In this report we summarize the themes that came up in the interviews.

The interviews were organized by TAMK team (the coordinator in the project) and by the leader of the piloting work package from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The interviews were made with 5 partner universities so that from each university the teachers who were responsible in the course development were invited. If all the teachers involved couldn't participate to the interview the teams were asked to discuss the questions within the teams before the interview so that the opinion of all the teachers could be heard.

The universities that the interviews were organized with and number of staff involved:

University, Country	Number of staff participated in the interview
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan	4
M.Auezov South Kazakhstan State university, Kazakhstan	2
Sh. Ualikhanov Kokshetau State University, Kazakhstan	9
Ural Federal University, Russia	2
University of Tyumen, Russia	3

The interviews were done using mainly English, but a person from TAMK's project team translated from Russian to Finnish if the teachers preferred to use Russian. This fact might cause some misunderstandings even though the partners tried to avoid them by asking confirmative questions. The interviews were organized online and each interview lasted about 45 minutes. All the interviews were recorded, except one.

The questions that were discussed in the interviews:

1. How do you find the feedback received from the pilots regarding the course(s) you have developed? How does it help you develop the courses?
2. How do you feel your capacity in online pedagogy is improved personally? What about the capacity of your university as higher education institution?
3. What have you learnt about the substance (sustainable waste management)?

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4. What are your next concrete tasks regarding to EduEnvi project?

Summary of the interviews

1. How do you find the feedback received from the pilots regarding the course(s) you have developed? How does it help you develop the courses?

The feedback received from the students concentrated on various issues. The teachers feel that the feedback is constructive and it is taken into account when developing the courses further. Some of the teachers described that the feedback show what is the most important in the course development and what issues are important for the students. All the teams are aware that developing an online course needs iterations and updates.

The feedback describes how the students feel the difficulty level of the course. Some of the teachers expressed that this is very important information, because in online environment it is more difficult to find ways how to support the students. Also it is good to hear what activities the students have liked and what kind of content they wish more. Some feedback was given for the structure of the course and many of students liked to experience new kinds of ways of learning.

Some of the feedback concentrated on the technology used in the online courses. The partners have used different platforms. In Kazakhstan, the national platform, OpenEdu, seem to work relatively well. The Russian universities, UrFU and Tyumen State University, used Eliademy platform that caused problems because the maintenance Eliademy could not be guaranteed. Now these universities will consider which platforms to use in future. This question needs to be solved in the university level.

Feedback was also received in regarding to the tools used in the online courses. Many students wished to have more videos and visual material and the teachers also think that it has been interesting to learn how to make videos, but in the other hand many of the teachers also expressed that there is still much to learn how to use videos in online education.

2. How do you feel your capacity in online pedagogy is improved personally? What about the capacity of your university as higher education institution?

Teachers described that they have learned about how to use different kinds of online learning tools and how to make videos. Also how to make and use blog in teaching has been learned. Many of the teachers told that they have learned much about how to design an online course, i.e. how to make the manuscript, how to plan the time consumption and how to assess. Also many of the teachers realized that it is important to prioritize materials because lots of information is available. Teachers have learned how to be short and concrete. Information on the copyright issues was also gained.

The teachers described that during this development process they have started to think teaching and learning more from the student perspective. The workshops organized during the project have helped the teachers to design the courses and pay attention to what competences should the students obtain and what kind of new methods can be used to achieve the learning outcomes.

Some of the teachers described that it is good that this kind of pioneering development work in the university can be done in co-operation so that the learning is wider and success is shared. It has been

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important that the teachers have gotten support from each others in their own university and from other partners in the project. Having new partners is valued. The teachers also mentioned that training in the project was practical which helped in organizing courses and learning activities. Some of the teachers also mentioned that many departments from the university have been able to take advantage of the learned issues, not only the core project team.

All of the teachers told that universities' online learning facilities have improved during the project. The equipment are modern and studios for making videos have been set up. Communication with the staff from technical support has increased during the project and the processes have been clarified.

3. What have you learnt about the substance (sustainable waste management)?

Teachers described how it has been very valuable to see concrete examples from the other partners and how the waste management is organized in Europe. Some of the teachers describe how the regional waste management system is forming at the moment and based on the learnings they feel that they are able to give some critical advices for the development. Some of the teacher also mention that it has been valuable to talk also colleagues from Saint Petersburg and so take the national perspective into account.

When seeking information lots of new knowledge have been gained. Areas that the teachers differently mentioned were risk assessment, life cycle analysis and legislation. In addition increased co-operation with companies and municipalities were mentioned.

All of the teams described how it is seen that the environmental issues are taken more seriously nowadays. Some of the teachers feel that the projects related to the area have been starting points for the development in the university. People's interest has been increasing and some of the teachers mentioned that widen perspective to education and increasing awareness has been important progress. For example, different kinds of theme days have been organized and co-operation with voluntary groups is increased. One teacher mentioned that it is important to promote that ecological themes would also be a part of comprehensive school curricula.

4. What are your next concrete tasks regarding to EduEnvi project?

All the teachers mentioned that they will improve the courses and continue learning new methods and using technologies. Some of the teachers mentioned that they try to be more creative and think more the students and how the studying will be more interesting and how the students will learn. Some of the teacher will improve the video lectures so that they are more attractive for the students, for example including teacher face in the video. Also new material in co-operation with the companies are planned.

All of the universities have accepted the courses and the courses can be offered to students already now. Most of the courses are master level and some are bachelor level. The accreditation is still incomplete, but the Kazakh teachers describe that the courses are now in the recommended list which means that the next step is the accreditation.

Many of the teachers mentioned that discussions and planning with the technical support teams will continue. Teachers still feel that they need support for example in video editing. Also some teachers

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feel that outlining the use of different platforms needs to be done in the university level. Some of the Kazakh teachers are participating in the development of the national platform.

Also exploiting the results of the project will be next tasks. Teachers described how they will promote the courses inside the university and also with other stakeholders. Demonstration sessions with working life partners will be organized.

Some of the teachers plan to write article related to the development work and the pedagogical aspects. Also joint articles are planned.