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Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on tuottaa viestintäsuunnitelma Erasmus intensiiviohjelmalle. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on standardoida ja helpottaa viestintää intensiiviohjelmissa viestintäsuunnitelman avulla. Viestintäsuunnitelman tarkoituksena on auttaa koordinaattoreita intensiiviohjelman koordinoinnissa. Opinnäytetyössä käsitellään organisaatioviestintää ja viestinnän suunnittelua projektin ja intensiiviohjelman koordinaattorin näkökulmasta.

Opinnäytetyön teoriaosa on jaettu kahteen osaan. Ensimmäisessä osassa kerrotaan Erasmus intensiiviohjelmista, sekä intensiiviohjelman viestinnälle asetuihin kriteereihin. Toisessa osassa käsitellään viestinnän suunnittelua sekä organisaatioviestintää. Teoriaosion jälkeen kuvataan viestintäsuunnitelman kehittämisprosessi tutkimuksen lähtökohdasta itse viestintäsuunnitelmaan.

Viestintäsuunnitelman kehitysprosessin lähtökohtana oli lähtötilanteen kartoitus eli intensiiviohjelman viestinnän kriteerien selvittäminen. Viestintäsuunnitelman suunnittelun lähtökohdaksi olivat intensiiviohjelman viestintä, viestinnän toimivuus ja tekijän omat kokemukset intensiiviohjelman viestinnästä. Lähtötilanteen kartoittamisen jälkeen suunnittelun tueksi kerättiin tietoa tutustumalla teoriakirjallisuuteen, ja teemahaastattelun avulla. Kehittämisprosessin tavoitteena oli muodostaa informatiivinen, mutta helppolukuinen viestintäsuunnitelma, joka olisi helppo hahmottaa myös henkilölle, joka ei tunne aihetta hyvin.

Opinnäytetyön tuloksena syntyi viestintäsuunnitelma, joka on tarkoitettu yleisesti intensiiviohjelmien koordinaattorien käyttöön. Viestintäsuunnitelma on esitetty taulukkomuodossa ja vastaa tekijän alkuperäistä visiota. Tutkimuksessa ei löytynyt erityisiä tarpeita lisätutkimukselle ja kehitykselle.

Asiasanat: intensiiviohjelma, projekti, viestinnän suunnittelu, viestintäsuunnitelma

Pakkanen, Marika

Communication Plan for an Erasmus Intensive Program

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The purpose of this thesis was to produce a communication plan for an Erasmus intensive program. The objective of the thesis was to standardize and ease communication in intensive programs with the help of the communication plan. The purpose of the communication plan is to help coordinators to coordinate an intensive program. This thesis investigates organizational communication and communication planning from the project's and coordinator's points of view.

The theoretical section of this thesis is divided into two parts. The first part covers intensive programs, and the second part is about communication planning and organizational communication. Followed by the theoretical section, is the developing process of the communication plan and it is described from the starting point to the communication plan itself.

The starting point of the development process of the communication plan was the mapping of the current status to list what kind of criteria Erasmus has set for the communication within an intensive program. The starting point for the planning of the communication plan was the communication of intensive programs, the functionality of communication and the writer's own experiences of communication within the intensive program. After the mapping of the starting point, information was obtained through a literary analysis and theme interview. The communication plan is simple but informative. The purpose is that also people who know less about communication planning can easily read and understand the communication plan. The communication plan is targeted at intensive program coordinators.

As the result of this thesis, a communication plan is created. The communication plan is meant for the use of the intensive program's coordinators'. The communication plan has been presented in a table format and it corresponds to the original vision of the writer. In the study special needs for further examination and for development were not found.

Keywords: intensive program, project, communication planning, communication plan

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1 Introduction

This thesis is a functional thesis in which a communication plan for an Erasmus intensive program is produced. At first, the purpose of this thesis was to produce a communication plan for an intensive program named PHATSID2014 (Promoting Healthy Ageing through Service Innovation and Design 2014). Because PHATSID2014 did not get funding from the EU and did not come true, the objective of this thesis was changed to produce a communication plan for any intensive program in general. The commission for this thesis came from the IC-SID partner network and the contact person of the network was Kristina Henriksson from Laurea University of Applied Sciences. This commission was received due to the writer's interest in communication and her work experience in the IC-SID intensive program.

The writer's work experience in IC-SID intensive program is used as part of basic information in this thesis. IC-SID (Intercultural Approach to Service Innovation and Design) was funded by the EU and its objective was to produce an intensive study program for students from Finland, Germany, Estonia and Poland. The project was launched in 2010 and it was finished during spring and summer 2013. In addition to the writer's own experiences, information was gathered by interviews, and by reading theory books on organizational communication and communication planning.

The objective of this thesis is to produce a communication plan for an Erasmus intensive program, in order to standardize communication in intensive programs. The objective of this thesis is to improve communication in intensive programs, and offer a managing tool for coordinators. The communication plan is based on theory about intensive programs and projects, organizational communication theory, on the information obtained from interviews, and on the writer's own experiences.

This thesis starts with a chapter which discusses about the Erasmus intensive programs. The first chapter discusses intensive programs in general, the intensive program as a developmental environment and the EU's criteria for the intensive program's communication. The second part of this thesis focuses on the communication planning process. The second chapter explains the concept of the communication plan, describes what communication channels are, discusses about intercultural communication, and how communication can be assessed. The third chapter describes the development process of the communication plan; the starting point of the research, results and the actual communication plan. In the last chapter, the conclusions and writer's own thesis evaluation are presented.

The writer's personal objective is to deepen her knowledge of the planning of communication of an intensive program and to include the project point of view. The writer's objective is to produce a simple but informative communication plan for an Erasmus intensive program. The purpose is that the communication plan is easy to understand even for people who do not know the topic very well.

2 Erasmus intensive programs

This thesis aims at producing a communication plan for an Erasmus intensive program. This chapter describes about EU intensive programs in general, describes the intensive program as a developmental environment, and speaks about communication criteria which the EU has set on intensive programs. The first section discusses Erasmus intensive programs in general, and criteria which the intensive program has to fulfill in order to get funding. The second section explains what kind of developmental environment an intensive program is. The third section explains Erasmus intensive programs' communication criteria set by the EU.

2.1 Intensive program

Erasmus intensive programs are EU funded intensive courses for students. Erasmus intensive programs support cooperation between European universities, and teacher and student exchange between European universities. The objective of intensive courses is to develop education. Intensive programs give teachers and students an opportunity to work in an intercultural environment. (CIMO 2013.)

EU has set specific criteria for intensive programs and the intensive program must fulfill these criteria to get funding. Basic criteria are that the length of the intensive program must be from ten days to six weeks, there has to be at least three participating universities from three different countries, at least ten students have to participate in the intensive program from abroad, and the intensive course has to be credited to the students' degree. The intensive program must also support the innovativeness in regard to academic contents and utilize ICT tools and services. The central objectives of intensive programs' are to encourage cooperation between universities and business life, promote the mobility of materializing innovations, and promote the utilizing of information and communication technology in teaching. (CIMO 2013.)

The university which coordinates the funding applies for the Erasmus intensive program from the EU. The financing has been divided into three expense categories according to the event,

organizational costs, travel expenses and subsistence. In Finland the application is sent to CIMO. (CIMO 2013.)

CIMO is an expert and service organization of international mobility and cooperation. CIMO's basic task is to promote the internationalization of the Finnish society in the areas of education, working life and culture among the youth. CIMO carries out the exchange programs, practice programs and scholarship programs, and is responsible for the national execution of the training programs and youth programs of the EU. (CIMO 2013.)

2.2 Preconditions for communication

Communication is an important part of the operation of the intensive program, and working communication advantages all participants. Communication which is well designed and executed, accelerates the start-up of the project, improves the visibility and awareness of the intensive program, promotes the spreading of the experiences and good practices, and brings the EU programs closer to the citizens. Communication, dissemination and exploitation are ways to evoke attention and spread information among as many relevant people as possible. (CIMO 2013. Ohjeita hankeviestintään.)

Erasmus intensive programs attempt to promote the utilization of information and communication technology in teaching and education services. (CIMO 2012.) Erasmus intensive programs are expected to use ICT services and tools as part of the organization of the intensive program. ICT services and tools support the preparation and follow-up of the intensive program, and contribute to the creation of a sustainable learning community in the subject area of the intensive program. ICT tools can also be used in dissemination. Dissemination activities are one evaluation criterion of the intensive program. The dissemination and exploitation activities of the intensive program's results should be planned and the optimal use of the results in the participating institutions and in the wider community should be ensured, if possible. ICT tools and services should be used to support the follow-up of the intensive program and contribute to the creation of a sustainable learning community. (EU 2013.)

Partnership, project management, monitoring and evaluation are one quality assessment criteria of new applications. A good intensive program has a communication plan which helps project management and monitoring of the progress of the project. In the communication plan communication actions are defined according to the objectives and target groups, and communication activities are realistic. Communication can be used to make the project partners committed to the project work and the communication plan can be used to ease the process. (CIMO 2013. Ohjeita hankeviestintään.)

2.3 Intensive program as a developmental environment

When the intensive program is viewed as a developmental environment, it is essential to acknowledge that organizers and customers see the intensive program in different ways. For organizers, the intensive program is a project, but customers see the intensive program as a study unit. In this thesis, the intensive program is seen and examined as a project. An intensive program, or, in this case, a project, differs from other organizations as a development environment because it is not as independent wholeness as many other organizations. The reason for this is that projects' actions are usually related to parent organization's actions and strategy. The producing process of a communication plan has some differences between independent organization e.g. companies, and with projects the communication of which is dependent on the parent organization's strategy, goals and communication channels. This sets guidelines and boundary conditions for the communication planning. (Ruuska 2012, 84.)

A project is a temporary organization which purpose is to carry out a specific assignment, e.g. the intensive program's coordinators and project group's goal is to carry out an intensive program. (Turner 2008, 27). Communication is crucial in the reaching of the goal. The project's communication has to be planned in the way which supports the project's action during its life-cycle, and the way that the communication can be realized in the parent organization's communication resources, which includes communication channels, project budget and communication rules. The project's communication plan also needs to support parent organization's communication plan. This is challenging because the parent organization's ways to communicate are not always as useful in projects, and communication objectives may differ from each other. (Ruuska 2012, 84, 212-213.)

3 Planning communication

This chapter discusses planning communication. At first, organizational communication is defined. After that, the communication planning process is explained. This chapter describes also where the communication planning process is based on intensive programs, and what the most central objectives in the intensive program's communication are.

Organizational communication means general communication processes within different kinds of organizations e.g. companies, project organizations and associations. Organizational communication is traditionally divided into internal and external communication, and it includes all messages that the organization sends and receives. Internal communication includes all communication what happens inside the organization, e.g. communication between manager and employee and between employees. External communication is information sent out from the organization, e.g. marketing and yearly reports. The meaning of organizational communica-

tion is to support business activity, inform stakeholders about the situation of the organization and profile the organization. To fill the purpose, communication needs to be standardized, which is made by communication planning. (Juholin 2006, 17, 36-37.)

Planning can be defined as a decision making which consists of three characteristic factors. Firstly, planning precedes operation. Secondly, planning is needed to coordinate decisions and to perceive a chain of decisions. Thirdly, planning enables the affecting of the future in the desired way. Planning is needed when the achieving of the desired stage requires several, and cognate decisions. Methods of planning vary by the situation and the context of issue that is to be planned. Strategic planning is defining the guidelines and the direction which enables communication to support organization's strategic objectives, and it is planning in the long term. Tactical planning is looking forward to resources, and using them to reach strategic objectives. Operative planning means decision making with limited resources. (Åberg 2000, 68.)

In business life communication planning is based on the organization's overall strategy (Ferguson 1999, 12.) In intensive programs, communication planning is based on objectives and the eventual outcome defined in the funding application sent to the EU. The coordinator is the one who is responsible for communication planning in the intensive programs. To carry out the planning task, the coordinator needs to understand the mission and objectives of an intensive program, because communication is meant to support the project group's efforts to achieve its objectives and mission. The most important objective of communication is that everything happens as planned. The planning of communication is very but executing plans is even more crucial. The organization of the intensive program is teamwork and communication is an essential part of it. (Henriksson 2013.)

For the coordinator, communication is a tool, but also one of the intensive program's resources. This means that communication needs to be planned, monitored and managed as other resources. Well organized and target-oriented communication is one of the most important success factors of the intensive program because the project work on the intensive program is target-oriented. Well organized and well working communication requires that the communication objectives and means to reach them are considered as part of the planning project of the project, when the project application is sent to the EU. Clear objectives and means to reach them help to control and assess the communication. (Ruuska 2012, 212-213.)

3.1 Communication plan

This chapter explains more about the actual communication plan. At first, the concept of the communication plan is defined. When the communication plan is defined, the purpose and content of the communication plan is explained.

So, what is the communication plan? The communication plan is a tool for the management. The communication plan can be understood as part of an operative planning of the communication and it is usually made for a short period of time e.g. for one year or even shorter time. The basic idea of a communication plan is that there is only one communication strategy and everything else is subordinate to it. (Juholin 2006, 103-108.)

Ferguson (1999) has listed different kinds of communication plans. The communication plan can be a strategic plan, an operational plan, a work plan, a support plan, or a crisis communication plan. All of these plans have different kinds of purposes and characteristics. The strategic communication plan is annual or for many years and it supplements a business plan. The operational communication plan resembles a strategic communication plan but it remains on a more general level. The work communication plan is more extensive than an operational plan; it is more concrete and detailed. The support communication plan is the most common kind of communication plan and it is produced to manage a specific activity. The crisis communication plan is produced to crisis situations and it is usually part of a larger crisis management plan. (Ferguson 1999, 14-17.) To be mentioned, the communication plan produced in this thesis is an operational communication plan.

The purpose of a communication plan is to guide the execution of communication in a long-term manner by following strategy. There are no ready, strict models for a communication plan. All organizations are unique and their operating environment is constantly changing. However, there are some features which are typical for good communication plans. These features include for example following; a good communication plan includes the definition of the basic communication guidelines, it is based on the listening of stakeholders, in the plan the basic messages or core messages are defined, the plan includes communication objectives and mapping of the modern stage of communication. (Tiedottaja 2007.)

According to Juholin (2009), a communication plan consists of different parts, which are daily communication, annual or regularly repeated operations, strategies, instructions, politics, process descriptions, projects and campaigns. All organizations do not need all of these parts and it is important to choose those parts which are the most essential to the organization in question. In addition to these parts, a good communication plan includes information about the modern state of communication, communication guidelines and values, information about stakeholders; what they are, who they are, and how they can be categorized, definitions about the content of the communication; what we want to communicate and how, communication objectives, information about how the communication is assessed, responsibilities, and resources. (Juholin 2009, 106; 122.)

The compilation of the communication plan starts from the setting of objectives. The setting of objectives is one of the most important things of the planning process because communication can be evaluated by comparing the state of communication to the objectives. Communication objectives should always be based on the starting point (modern stage) of communication. The starting point can be mapped e.g. with SWOT analyses. The mapping of the modern state of communication answers the questions “What kind is communication in the organization at the moment?” and “How well does communication support the overall strategy?” The communication objectives are set on the basis of the answers of these two questions. The communication plan itself sets guidelines for reaching the objectives; “How to communicate in different situations, so that the objectives would be reached?” (Juholin 2009, 99-102.)

The intensive program’s communication plan should support the intensive program’s operations during the whole the intensive program’s life cycle; during writing and sending the project application, during the EU’s decision, during the planning process of the intensive program, during the realization of the intensive program, during reporting, during EU’s assessment, during acceptance of the final report, and during the finalizing of the intensive program. The communication plan needs to pay attention to communications which are needed during each stage of the intensive program’s life cycle, and to demands and preconditions which each stage sets for the communication. (CIMO 2013. Ohjeita hankeviestintään.)



Figure 1 Intensive program's communication planning

In addition to the planning of the communication, the theory base of this thesis concentrates on four subject matters; on communication between cultures (intercultural communication), on the communication of the management (managerial communication), on communication channels and on the evaluation of the communication. These four things are essential when the communication of the intensive program is planned. The communication of the intensive program happens between cultures and the communication has to be designed so that the communication between cultures would function as well as possible. Managerial communication is an important part of the project group’s communication and communication with stakeholders because the management has to inform interest groups about the matters con-

cerning the intensive program and because the management is eventually responsible for the success of the communication. The choice of communication channels is essential. The communicational channels have to be chosen so that they will support the communication during the whole lifecycle of the intensive program and that the message reaches the destination. The evaluation of the communication (communication assessment) is a part of the communication of the intensive program because without the evaluation it is difficult to improve communication. All these four subject matters are discussed in the following in more detail.

3.2 Intercultural communication

This chapter discusses about intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is something what happens daily in intensive programs. This chapter first discusses what intercultural communication is and after that some examples of how intercultural communication occurred in IC-SID intensive programs, are given.

Cultural differences affect how individuals perform in their job. In intensive programs, intercultural communication happens on a daily basis because participants come from different countries, and even the intensive program itself can be organized in a country which is not the home country of any participants. Communication across cultures sets some challenges to communication, but these challenges are easy to overcome with a good organization of the communication. (Internetix 1999.)

Culture consists of all those things which an individual must know and in what one needs to believe so that one can act in the way that is accepted among community members. In intercultural communication participants bring information to the interaction situation. Information is typical for one's own culture or the group but can be unfamiliar to the conversation partner. Information has a significant role because it regulates, what kind of interaction is shaped. (Internetix 1999.)

According to Guirdham (2005) culture affects behavior and communication at all levels. People are rarely conscious of their culture even though culture affects basically all aspects the people or a group interacts with each other or with outsiders. Culture and communication are closely linked. Cultures are common ways of thinking and acting and communication is the process of creating and using shared meanings within a specific community. (Guirdham 2005, 42-46.)

Hopkins (2009) has listed some things that e.g. a coordinator of an intensive program can do in order to improve intercultural communication and project work inside the project organi-

zation. Firstly, people need feedback about how well they are doing, so the coordinator should give them feedback. Secondly, people need a clear description of what they are supposed to do. This helps people from different cultures to understand the same things in the same way and decrease misunderstandings. Thirdly, the coordinator should provide clear descriptions about tasks given to individuals. This is also a way to decrease misunderstandings. (Hopkins 2009, 58-59.)

In the IC-SID intensive program participated students got experience about intercultural communication during their team work. Students worked in multicultural teams, and learned to communicate with people from different cultures and learned different ways of action. Students took part in lectures kept by teachers from different countries, and learned what kind of teaching styles teachers use in different countries. Students also familiarized themselves with English service culture and learn how to communicate with English company representatives. This was a very didactic experience for students which they can benefit from their future life.

Intercultural communication occurred also in the project assistants' work. Project assistants did not have any earlier experience of intensive program's work. Assistants needed to learn how to communicate formally with English company representatives. Assistants also communicated a lot with teachers and students and got experience of the communication with multicultural customers. Communication with company representatives, teachers and students teach assistants international networking skills. (Assistants 2013.)

3.3 Managerial communication

This chapter handles managerial communication. The coordinator is responsible for implementing and developing the planning of the communication. The coordinator is the person, who monitors that communication is both planned and executed according to the communication plan, and ensures that communication is used in implementing organization's vision, mission and objectives. In this chapter the concept of managerial communication is first defined, and then the meaning of managerial communication is more discussed.

Managerial communication means management's communication within the departments and employees. Rai (2009) states that managers need to communicate in all forms of communication; in writing, orally and nonverbally. Managerial communication concerns a manager's skills to address difficult situations e.g. customer dissatisfaction or crisis situations. (Rai 2009, 2.)

Managerial communication is needed to direct operations inside the organization. Managerial communication affects norms, employees' commitment, team spirit, and behavior inside an organization and inside departments. The purpose of managerial communication is to inform different target groups, which can be certain employees, departments or stakeholder outside the organization. Managerial communication is an important part of an organization's communications because with information it is possible to affect a target groups' image of the organization. This has an impact on organization's reputation. In managerial communication as all communication it is important to acknowledge that information needs to be edited to a suitable form for different target groups so that the message will be received and understood. (Åberg 2006, 135.)

How about managerial communication from project's or intensive program's point of view? The project coordinator is the operative manager of the project, and responsible for a daily managing of the project. The coordinator's task is to reach appointed objectives with limited amount of resources. The managing of the project differs from a managing of a company, because the project will never reach a stable state. Because of the constant unstableness, effective management of the project requires constant forethought, which helps the project organization to respond to the pressure. (Ruuska 2012, 130.)

Communication is needed when management wants to inform its employees about the happenings inside the organization or external parties about the state of the project. From the project's point of view internal communication is communication between coordinator and representatives of the project consortium, and external communication is communication from project to the parent organization, or to other external parties e.g. to the EU. As a manager of the project, the coordinator is responsible for the working of project's internal and external communication. (Ruuska 2012, 91-93.)

In addition to written and electronic communication with the partners, the project coordinator needs to pass information about the project to the higher management (in intensive programs case to the EU). The project coordinator's task is to be sure that the higher management has the right image about the project. The project also needs information about organization's overall happenings and about decisions which have been made in other projects, because they may affect the operations of the project. In project organization's internal informing the project coordinator has an important role because the coordinator interacts with the stakeholders and can get information which cannot be gotten from official communication channels. Interaction between the coordinator and project group is important because of internal communication and project group's internal informing. (Ruuska 2012, 93-94.) However, according to Heagney (2011) the primary responsibility of the coordinator is to make sure that

all work is completed on time, within budget and scope, and at the correct performance level. (Heagney 2011, 24.)

3.4 Communication channels

Communication requires instruments so that the messages can be delivered. These instruments are called communication channels. In this chapter, the concept of communication channel is explained. At first is told how the communication channels can be categorized. Thereafter that it is discussed what the most preferred communication channel is, and which the most used channels are. Finally it is explained how the communication channels should be selected.

Organizations communicate both internally and externally. In order to do this, organizations need different kinds of communication channels for delivering messages. According to Juholin (2006) a communication channel is the way the message is transmitted from source to receiver. Channels include all five senses and any technological instrument which is used for the transmitting of the message. The channels can be divided into local and long-distance channels. Through communication channels it is possible to communicate both straight and transmit information forward. (Juholin, 2006, 163-164.)

Farrant (2003) divides the communication into direct and indirect communication. In direct communication, people interact in real time, e.g. in the same location, or via video and audio conferencing. Indirect communication includes publications, videotapes and audio discs. Both direct and indirect communications can be divided into more specific communication channels, which are e.g. face-to-face communication, conferences, notice boards, email, intranet, publications and annual reports. From these channels, face-to-face communication can take many forms, such as meetings and briefing. (Farrant 2003, 33.) In the communication planning the organization takes a stand which communication channels it uses.

Face-to-face communication is the most preferred communication. It is at the same time a primitive and sophisticated communication form. According to Farrant (2003), "Face-to-face communication is potentially the most effective form of internal communications". Face-to-face communication is two-way communication with a living response, and enables participants to make sure that they understand the message, and also that they have been understood. Even the new technologies have not decreased face-to-face communication inside organizations. Concluded, if the organization has a sense that internal communication should be improved, it can be made by increasing the meaningful face-to-face communication. (Farrant 2003, 50.)

When face-to-face communication is the most preferred communication, the mostly used communication channels are email and telephone. Nowadays technology enables real-time communication through email and phone, in situations where face-to-face communication is not possible, or is not meaningful. In some situations it is easier for the organizations to inform people by mail. By using email as a communication channel, the organization can also ensure that all employees will get the same information, which does not vary from one employee to another. (Tourish & Hargie 2004, 11.)

Communication objectives set the guidelines for the communication itself; how to communicate and which channels are effective. The communication channels themselves can be any of those channels presented in the earlier sections e.g. face-to-face communication, email or telephone. No matter which communication channels are used, the use of channels is always tied to intensive program's and project's needs. Every intensive program is unique, and because of this reason the use of channels needs to be planned separately for each intensive program. (Ruuska 2012, 84-85.)

In intensive programs, a good practice is that several different communication channels are used. The using of many communication channels instead of trusting one, improves communication because it enables real-time communication and sharing information quickly. Possible communication channels that can be used are e.g. emails, Adobe Connect, Skype, meetings, Optima, web pages, face-to-face communication and telephone. These all and even more were used in IC-SID, and using of multiple channels was experienced as a good thing. (Assistants 2013.)

3.5 Communication assessment

This chapter discusses about communication assessment. In this chapter, the communication audit method is presented at first. Later in the chapter is explained how the effectiveness and quality of communication can be measured.

Communication assessment is an important part of communication planning, because results that are gained from the assessment process help to develop an organization's communication. Assessment results give information for preplanning and developing for communication. Assessment results also reveal how well the communication plan corresponds to an organization's strategy, and how well the organization has communicated its strategic objectives forward. (Åberg 2000, 268-271.)

Communication assessment can be made by using a communication audit. The communication audit means the research of organizational communication. The communication audit is an

assessment of communication internally. The communication audit can be any test, which is designed and used for examining the quality of communication inside the organization. The communication audit has to be both valid and reliable which means that the answers received with the communication audit are meaningful, and that the results can be repeated. (Zaremba 2010, 256-258.)

Communication assessment has two objectives; firstly to examine how effective communication is, and secondly to examine the quality of communication. In sum, communication has been effective when it has caused changes in something and when things are progressing. The effectiveness of communication can be measured by comparing the modern stage of communication to something, e.g. compare the modern stage of communication to communication objectives, compare the modern stage of communication to the previous stage, or compare competitors' communication and the organization's own communication. (Åberg 2000, 269-271.) Questionnaires or interviews can be used to the quality assessment of communication for example survey questionnaires can be used among employees when communication satisfaction is examined. Interviews can also be one-to-one interviews, where employees or communication executives are interviewed individually. Interview can also be group interviews, where a group of employees is interviewed at the same time. (Tourish & Hargie 2004, 241.)

The results of communication assessment interests different kinds of target audiences. Target audiences can be divided into primary, secondary and tertiary target audiences. A primary target audience is the one who is requesting the evaluation of communication, e.g. the coordinator of the intensive program or the EU. Usually organization's management or other decision-makers are the primary target audience. A secondary target audience is the one who is involved in the communication to some way e.g. the project group or stakeholders. A tertiary target audience does not take part to the communication, but still wants to be informed about the situation of the organization, e.g. general public. (Torres, R., Preskill, H., Piontek. 1996, 66.)

When the communication audit process is finished, the results have to be reported. The results can be reported in two ways; in written form in a report or in a spoken form in a presentation. In the intensive program, the results can be reported by spoken in an evaluation meeting to the project group, and by part of the EU report to the EU. In the results, the report needs to tell about findings, and the findings should be explained. After the findings are reported, the evaluator should improve communication by setting recommendations. The communication objectives should be reworked based on the recommendations. (Zaremba 2010, 268-269.)

4 Development process of the communication plan

In this chapter, the development process of the communication plan is described. In the first section (4.1), the starting point of the research, and the progress of the study is explained. In the second section (4.2), the research method (interview), is opened as a concept and the reason for the selection of this method is explained. The results of the research are described in the section 4.2.2. In the third section (4.3), the communication plan is presented and explained. In the fourth section (4.4), the communication plan produced in this thesis, is evaluated.

4.1 Starting point and the progress of the study

The starting point of this thesis was to prepare a communication plan for the intensive program named PHATSID2014. Because the EU did not give funding for the PHATSID2014 intensive program, the direction of the study changed. The new starting point was to prepare the communication plan for an Erasmus intensive program in general. The goal was to develop such a communication plan, which a coordinator of any possible intensive program could use.

The study began by reading theory books and by becoming acquainted with the topic. The needed information was collected by reading organizational communication theory, studying the EU's criteria for the intensive program's communication, using writer's own experiences gained during the project work on the IC-SID intensive program, and by interviews. Interviews were made after the information base of this thesis was written. Interviewees were Kristina Henriksson, who has coordinated several intensive programs including IC-SID, IC-SID project assistants Jenni Saarinen and Emilia Grön, who have practical experience of the communication in the intensive program, and Britta Thege, who has participated in the IC-SID intensive program, and was to be the coordinator of the PHATSOD2014 intensive program.

After the interviews were made and the results were analyzed, the developing process of the communication plan started. The communication plan is based on both theory and interview results. The communication plan can be presented in different ways, and the first thing in creating the communication plan was to decide how to present it. After a pondering how the communication should be presented, the writer decided to present the communication plan in a table form. The communication plan is presented as a table because the table is informative but also easy to read and understand by people who are not so familiar with the topic. It is important that the communication plan is clear, because it is desired that as many coordinators as possible will take the communication plan in use. If the communication plan is confusing and difficult to read, coordinators will less likely use it. As the outcome of the research

the communication plan was created, and it is presented and explained in Chapter 3.1 and in attachment three (3).

4.2 Realization of the research

This chapter describes how the research was implemented. After the starting point was mapped, the writer became acquainted with the theory literature. Based on the theory literature, the writer carried out theme interviews. Interviewees were the commissioner, teacher who participated to IC-SID intensive program and was supposed to be the coordinator of PHATSID2014 intensive program, and two IC-SID project assistants.

After interview as a research method is explained, the results of the interviews are summarized. Interview questions were conducted from the organizational communication theory and the answers of interviewees' supplement information gotten for literature. With interviews, the writer wanted to understand both expert's and user's point of view in the communication planning of the intensive program.

4.2.1 Interview

In this thesis, interview is used as a research method. Interview is a suitable data collection method e.g. in a qualitative data collection because the qualitative research focuses usually to human life or behavior. The qualitative research is also used in researching organizations and interaction. By interview, the researcher can examine the way the interviewee thinks and collects experiences about phenomenon in question. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 41-42.)

There are different kinds of ways to make an interview. In this project, theme interview is used. Theme interview is semi-structured interview method. In semi-structured interview questions and themes are specified before the interview but interviewee can answer freely into questions. Themes are defined before the interview but questions are not in specific order or form. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 47-48.)

In this research, the goal of interviews was to find out, what is a good way to organize the communication of an intensive program, and to know how communication was organized and working in IC-SID intensive program, which is Kristina Henriksson's latest intensive program. Kristina Henriksson is a commissioner of this thesis and one of interviewees. She has coordinated several intensive programs and is an expert in organizing intensive programs. Other interviewees were IC-SID project assistants Jenni Saarinen and Emilia Grön, and Britta Thege, who has participated in IC-SID intensive programs, and was supposed to be the project coordinator of PHATSID2014.

Before analyzing the results, interviews were transcribed. With the interviews, the writer wanted to find out, what well organized communication means, and what the good way to organize the communication is.

4.2.2 Results

This chapter is summarized the results gained from theme interviews. The results handle all subjects examined in chapter two. After the interview results are explained, the communication plan is presented.

The goal of organizational communication is to create shared understanding about things concerning the intensive program. Working communication is crucial for the success of the intensive program because if communication is not well organized, the plans will not take place in real life. For a successful intensive program it is important that communication works in two ways and that everybody participates in communication, though it may sometimes be difficult. Communication can fail for many different reasons; it may fail because of it is poorly planned, because of the coordinator or because everybody does not participate in the communication. However, failure in communication is not always the coordinators' fault, even though people often think so. (Henriksson 2013.)

In international projects in general, modern communication tools e.g. email, Skype and Adobe Connect, are really good in use if everybody is willing to use them. The using of these channels requires that everybody knows how to use them and has access to them. Email is a traditional communication channel and it has many ways of using. Email can be used as an email meeting, when the meeting can be documented, e.g. decisions and different stages of communication can be documented. Adobe Connect and is a good tool when organizing meetings where participants are from different countries. Skype is also a good tool for discussions; it can be used in group discussions or in smaller discussions. (Henriksson 2013.)

It is good to use many different kinds of communication channels because it helps dissemination and to reach partners, students and members of project group. In intensive programs, where partners are from different countries, it is even more important that communication channels are carefully selected. In intensive programs, there is less face-to-face communication between partners because of the distance. Meetings are still important, and e.g. Adobe Connect is a good channel for online meetings. Also some other communication channel in addition to email is good to be in use e.g. Skype, because email does not always reach people in real-time. (Assistants 2013.)

Orientation to project work is vital especially for individuals who do not have much experience from it. Assistants, for example, need time to learn formal communication with partners and customers. It is good if the coordinator provides basic instructions for the project group, when the project work starts; then everybody is on the same page. Instructions are maybe needed also in later in the project and the coordinator should always provide instructions and information when needed. (Assistants 2013.)

In the end, the coordinator is the one who is responsible for working communication. Communication between coordinator and project group differs between projects and it is more challenging in international projects e.g. in intensive programs. The coordinator has the responsibility for making decisions and strict discipline is needed so that the decisions will come true. People are sometimes really different, e.g. some people do not answer emails as quickly as others. (Henriksson 2013.)

The IC-SID project, for example, did not have a written communication plan, but the project application includes guidelines for communication, and also budget sets guidelines. Communication can be monitored by monitoring the progressing of things - they do not progress if communication does not work. Communication can be evaluated with evaluating the overall success of the project and how participants feel about communication. The intensive program's official feedback is gathered by using EU's feedback charts. In addition to this, participants can be interviewed. A good practice is to prepare a SWOT analysis of feedbacks. SWOT analysis is prepared based only on feedbacks and the feedback is pondered in the evaluation meeting. (Henriksson 2013.)

The most important goal of the intensive program is that students will benefit from the course by learning intercultural teamwork, and working in a new environment. Another essential goal is well functioning cooperation of international teaching team. Communication is organized in a good way, if questions are answered and needed information is provided. Communication channels are in a crucial role in providing information, because channels need to reach all participants. (Thege 2013.)

4.3 Outcome of the research

This section handles the communication plan which is produced as the eventual outcome of this thesis process. The communication plan includes information about communications, responsibilities, targets, channels, frequently and the duration of communication during the intensive program. The communication plan is presented on below, and communication and instructions can also be found in attachment three (3).

Communication type (1)	Deliverable (2)	Description (3)	Communication channel (4)	Frequently (5)	Duration (6)	Responsible (7)	Audience (stakeholders) (8)
Daily communication	Daily communication with project group and stakeholders		Email, Skype, Adobe Connect	Daily		Coordinator, assistants, project group	Project group, partners, EU, case companies
Reports	EU report	Report about the project's results to EU	Written report			Coordinator +assistants	EU
Meetings	Planning meeting	Planning the IP			2-3 days	Project group	Project group
	Teacher team meetings (Online meetings)	Meeting to review progress and planning the IP	Skype, Adobe Connect	Monthly	1-3 hours	Project group	Project group
	Meeting between coordinator + assistants	Meeting to review progress and planning the IP	Face-to-face, email, Skype	Weekly	1-2 hours	Coordinator + assistants	Coordinator + assistants
	Evaluation meeting	Evaluation of the IP	Face-to-face, Skype		2-3 days	Project group	Project group
Organization of event		Organizing flights, transportation, accommodation, food etc.	Email, Skype			Coordinator + assistants	Project group, case companies, partners
Marketing	Marketing materials	Informing students about the IP	Face-to-face, email, web page		One month	Project group	Students
Student selections	Interview	Selection of students for IP	Face-to-face (Interview)		One month	Project group	Students, partners
	Informing selected students	Informing students about participation	Face-to-face, email, web page		One month	Project group	Students, partners
Communication with case companies (if there is case companies)		Marketing of the IP and informing case companies	Email, Skype, web page, face-to-face	At least monthly		Coordinator + assistants	Case companies
Memos	Memos of meetings	Memos of meeting for partners and for reporting	Written document	After every meeting		Assistants	Project group, EU
Communication assessment	Questionnaire	Questionnaire about how to communication has been working	Written document / e-form	Before evaluation meeting		Coordinator + assistants	Project group, students, case companies
Web pages		Web page about IP and it's achievements	Internet			Coordinator + assistants (+ project group)	Project group, students, case companies, EU, other
Dissemination		Dissemination about IP using multiple communication channels	Written documents, Internet			Project group	Project group, students, case companies, EU, other

Table 1: Communication plan

Table one presents a communication plan for the Erasmus intensive program. The objective of the communication plan is to ensure that everything planned also comes true, and that communication practices support project work.

The communication plan is presented as a table because the table is simple but informative, and also easy to read. The objective was to produce a communication plan which is easy to understand even for a person who is not familiar with the topic, and that all coordinators could use it as a guideline. In the next sections, the table is explained from left to right.

On the left, the communication type (1) is presented. In the project, the communication types used are reports, meetings and different communications which are related to event organization. After the communication type is presented, the deliverable communication (2) e.g. report, meeting or marketing, is described more in detail in the second column. In the third column (3) a short description about the deliverable communication is given; what it is and why it is needed.

Communication channels (4) are described in the fourth column. Communication channels that are used in the communications are mainly electronic channels e.g. email, Skype and Adobe Connect. Electronic communication channels are used because they are suitable for situations in which face-to-face communication is not possible. In the intensive programs there are partners participating from several different countries so it would be difficult and expensive to organize several face-to-face meetings. Face-to-face meetings are used only as planning and evaluation meetings, and in meetings between the coordinator and assistants.

Communication frequently (5) and duration (6) are described on the fifth and sixth column. Frequency and duration presents how often the communication should take place and how long the communication e.g. a meeting takes. Frequently and duration are only suggestions to consider.

In the seventh column (7) is told, who is responsible for the communication. The whole project group is responsible for the working communication. The final responsibility belongs to the coordinator.

In the last column, a target audience (8) of communication is presented. Target audience means people or group to whom the communication is targeted or who participates in the communication. The target audience can also be understood as the stakeholders of the project. There are different kinds of audiences, and in the table, the primary audiences of each communication presented.

Communication assessment is presented in the end of the communication plan (third column down below). Communication of the intensive program could be evaluated with questionnaires because questionnaires are easy to do. Questionnaires could be made after the intensive program to students, teachers and case companies' representatives who participated in the intensive program. The communication assessment result could also be part of the EU report.

4.4 Evaluation of the communication plan

This section handles the evaluation of the communication plan produced in this thesis. The communication plan is evaluated by the commissioner (Henriksson) and by the writer. The commissioner evaluates four things; the communication plan as a whole, the usability of the communication plan, the clarity of the communication plan, the innovativeness of the communication plan and in addition to these four things give other comments for the communication plan.

Comissioner is the opinion that the writer has managed to collect all essential sections of communication in the communication plan table. Comissioner thinks that the communication plan will be useful for many intensive programs, but it needs to be recognized that all intensive programs are coordinated in different ways, e.g. all intensive programs don't have case companies and all coordinators don't have assistants. In some intensive programs, the responsibilities are straight divided into partners and in other intensive programs' coordinators do everything by themselves. This means that the process of project management can be totally different between different intensive programs. (Henriksson 2013.)

The communication plan created in this thesis includes practically all the things, which were included in the realization of IC-SID intensive program. One part of the communication plan is the assessment of communication, which is a good thing in an ideal situation but cannot be realized in practice. The reason for this is that participants already fill in many questionnaires, and it may not be meaningful to do more questionnaires. Instead of questionnaires, the communication could be assessed with one question SWOT-analysis. (Henriksson 2013.)

The communication produced in this thesis is usable and working and it can be partly applied to different intensives. The communication plan as a whole is not suitable for all intensive programs. The communication plan does not contain anything especially new, except the suggestion for doing the questionnaire for everybody about the working of communication. The communication plan is a good proposal for all coordinators of intensive programs, and especially for those coordinators who are coordinating an intensive program for the first time. (Henriksson 2013.)

The writer is satisfied with the thesis. The thesis process was demanding but rewarding, and the writer learned many things during the process. On the writer's mind, the thesis is clear wholeness. The communication plan created in this thesis is in accordance with the writer's wishes. The writer is satisfied with the communication plan as a whole. Even though the writer is satisfied with the thesis, on the writer's mind the thesis is can be considered as a success only when the communication plan will be taken into use.

5 Conclusions

In this chapter, the conclusions of this thesis are presented and the results of this thesis are compiled. At first, the purpose and objective of this thesis are repeated. Later in the chapter the results are presented and the achievement of the purpose and objective is evaluated.

This thesis was a functional thesis and the research was carried out as a qualitative research. The purpose of this thesis was to produce a communication plan for an Erasmus intensive program. At first the purpose was to produce a communication plan for PHATSID2014 intensive program. Because PHATSID2014 intensive program did not get funding, the purpose was changed to produce a communication plan for Erasmus intensive programs in general. The objective of this thesis was to standardize communication in intensive programs and offer coordinators a tool for helping the managing of the intensive program.

The two main themes of this thesis were Erasmus intensive programs and communication planning. The information was collected by reading theory literature and with theme interviews. As a result of the research, the communication plan was created. The goal was to create a simple but informative communication plan, which would be easy to use, apply and understand even for people who are not familiarized with the topic. The communication plan be presented in many different ways, but the writer decided to present the communication plan in a table because it is a clear way to present the idea.

In the research no big differences occurred in information collected from theory literature and from theme interviews. Theory literature gave the writer a general idea about the communication planning and interviews helped to deepen writer's knowledge. The writer's work experience also helped in the planning process of the communication plan, because it eased the writer to see communication from the intensive program's point of view.

As a summary from the research, a well working communication is important for the intensive program to succeed. The working communication requires well planned communication and the communication plan is the way to manage communication and intensive program's pro-

cesses. Work on the intensive programs is teamwork and everybody has to take part in the communication. Sometimes failures may happen, but they are not always coordinator's fault.

The desired outcome of this thesis is that coordinators will use the communication plan presented in this thesis. The purpose of this thesis was well met, but the objective will be totally achieved only if coordinators bring the communication plan into use. On the other hand, this thesis still achieved its objective because it offered coordinators a managing tool.

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Attachment 1 Interview form

Questions for an interview of IC-SID project assistants (Jenni Saarinen and Emilia Grön). The aim of this interview is to get information of the overall stage of communication in the IC-SID project from employee's point of view.

1. In your opinion, how did the overall communication work during the IC-SID project?
2. Did you get enough orientation when you started to work in the IC-SID project?
3. How the managerial communication has been working during the project?
4. Do the communication channels that are used in internal communication work well?
5. Do you get enough information in change situations?
6. Do you have any proposal of improvement in mind, which could have been considered when preparing communication plan for the next project?

Attachment 2 Interview form

Interview questions for Kristina Henriksson (coordinator of IC-SID project and customer of the thesis). The objective of this interview is to gain new information about the organization of communication in projects. The IC-SID project is used as an example because it reminds the project for that the communication plan is designed in the thesis.

1. What are the main objectives of organizational communication in projects?
2. What kind of challenges project organization sets for communication?
3. What kind of communication problems you have faced when working in projects?
4. What kind of communication objectives IC-SID project has?
5. What kinds of communication channels are suitable for international projects, where is only a little face-to-face communication?
6. How the managerial communication has been organized in IC-SID?
7. How the communication between you (coordinator) and employees has been working in IC-SID?
8. What is the good way to communicate about change situations in projects?
9. Does IC-SID project have a communication plan?
10. How is the communication monitored?
11. How the communication in IC-SID has been evaluated?
12. How you are used the evaluation results?
13. Do you have any suggestions for improvement concerning the organization of communication in the next project?

Attachment 3 Communication plan and instructions

Communication type (1)	Deliverable (2)	Description (3)	Communication channel (4)	Frequently (5)	Duration (6)	Responsible (7)	Audience (stakeholders) (8)
Daily communication	Daily communication with project group and stakeholders		Email, Skype, Adobe Connect	Daily		Coordinator, assistants, project group	Project group, partners, EU, case companies
Reports	EU report	Report about the project's results to EU	Written report			Coordinator +assistants	EU
Meetings	Planning meeting	Planning the IP			2-3 days	Project group	Project group
	Teacher team meetings (Online meetings)	Meeting to review progress and planning the IP	Skype, Adobe Connect	Monthly	1-3 hours	Project group	Project group
	Meeting between coordinator + assistants	Meeting to review progress and planning the IP	Face-to-face, email, Skype	Weekly	1-2 hours	Coordinator + assistants	Coordinator + assistants
	Evaluation meeting	Evaluation of the IP	Face-to-face, Skype		2-3 days	Project group	Project group
Organization of event		Organizing flights, transportation, accommodation, food etc.	Email, Skype			Coordinator + assistants	Project group, case companies, partners
Marketing	Marketing materials	Informing students about the IP	Face-to-face, email, web page		One month	Project group	Students
Student selections	Interview	Selection of students for IP	Face-to-face (Interview)		One month	Project group	Students, partners
	Informing selected students	Informing students about participation	Face-to-face, email, web page		One month	Project group	Students, partners
Communication with case companies (if there is case companies)		Marketing of the IP and informing case companies	Email, Skype, web page, face-to-face	At least monthly		Coordinator + assistants	Case companies
Memos	Memos of meetings	Memos of meeting for partners and for reporting	Written document	After every meeting		Assistants	Project group, EU
Communication assessment	Questionnaire	Questionnaire about how to communication has been working	Written document / e-form	Before evaluation meeting		Coordinator + assistants	Project group, students, case companies
Web pages		Web page about IP and it's achievements	Internet			Coordinator + assistants (+ project group)	Project group, students, case companies, EU, other
Dissemination		Dissemination about IP using multiple communication channels	Written documents, Internet			Project group	Project group, students, case companies, EU, other

Communication plan for the Erasmus intensive program is presented in a table above. The purpose of the communication plan is to standardize communication in the intensive program and to be a managing tool for coordinators. The communication plan is aimed at project coordinators coordinating an EU intensive program. In the table all essential parts of communication are presented.

Table is divided in to eight columns. In the next sections, the table is explained from left to right.

In the first column on the left (1) different kinds of communication types are presented. In the project, the communication types used are reports, meetings and different communications which are related to event organization.

In the second column (2) the deliverable communication is described more in detail. The deliverable communication can be for example a report, a meeting or a communication relates to marketing.

In the third column (3) a short description about the deliverable communication is given. The column explains what the deliverable communication is and why it is needed.

In the fourth column (4) the communication channels are presented. Communication channels that are used are mainly electric channels because they support best intensive program's operations. There can be more channels used, these channels are only examples.

In the fifth column (5) the frequently of communication of presented. Communication frequently means how often the communication should take place.

In the sixth column (6) the duration of communication is presented. The duration of communication suggests how much time the communication takes. Given durations are only suggestions to consider.

In the seventh column (7) is told, who is responsible for the communication. The whole project group is responsible for the working communication. The final responsibility belongs to the coordinator.

In the last column (8), a target audience (or the target audiences) of communication is presented. Target audience means people or group to whom the communication is targeted or who participates in the communication. In the table, the primary audiences of each communication presented.

Communication assessment is presented in the end of the communication plan (third column down below). Communication of the intensive program could be evaluated for example with questionnaires because questionnaires are easy to do. The communication assessment result can be part of the EU report.

Attachment 4 Mind map

