# The Process of Creating a Guidebook for a New Erasmus Intensive Programme Coordinator

Grön, Emilia

Saarinen, Jenni

2013 Leppävaara

**Laurea University of Applied Sciences**
Laurea Leppävaara

# The Process of Creating a Guidebook for a New Erasmus Intensive Programme Coordinator

Grön, Emilia
Degree programme in
Service management
Saarinen, Jenni
Degree programme in
Hospitality management
Thesis
December, 2013

**Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu**
**Tiivistelmä**

Leppävaara
Palvelujen tuottaminen ja johtaminen,
Hotelli-ja ravintola-alan liikkeenjohto

Grön, Emilia; Saarinen, Jenni

**The Process of Creating a Guidebook for a New Erasmus Intensive Programme Coordinator**

Vuosi 2013 Sivumäärä 50

Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu on toiminut koordinaattorina lukuisissa Erasmus-intensiiviohjelmissa (IP). Tämä kokemus koettiin tärkeäksi jakaa ja siirtää sellaisille intensiiviohjelmien koordinaattoreille, jotka suunnittelevat järjestävänsä projektin ensimmäistä kertaa. Tässä opinnäytetyössä keskitytään löytämään tehokkaimmat keinot järjestää Erasmus-intensiiviohjelma.

Tämän työn tarkoituksena oli tutkia parhaita mahdollisia tapoja toteuttaa erasmus-rahoitteinen IP. Tutkimustyön tuotoksena tuotettiin ohjekirja, joka auttaa ensimmäistä kertaa Erasmus-IP:tä koordinoivaa suoriutumaan tehtävästään mahdollisimman hyvin. Ohjekirja sisältää neuvoja ja ehdotuksia ja käytännön vinkkejä Euroopan Unionin asettamien ohjeistuksien sallimalla tavalla. Ohjekirja sisältää koordinaattorin työnkuvauksen.

Teoreettisen taustan pohjana käytettiin kulttuurillisten erojen ymmärtämistä ja kulttuurienvälistä kommunikointia. Koska intensiiviohjelmissa on osallistujia lukuisista eri maista, eri kulttuurien ymmärtäminen ja kommunikointitaidot koettiin tärkeiksi arvoiksi. Tutkimusmetodeihin kuuluivat teemahaastattelut Suomen kansallisen toimiston, CIMO:N edustajan sekä professori Britta Thegen kanssa, joka on ensikertalainen Erasmus-IP:n koordinoinnissa. Koska tämän työn kirjoittajat toimivat assistentteina Laurean organisoimassa intensiiviohjelmassa, IC-SID2013:ssa, observointi valittiin päätutkimusmetodiksi. Tutkimusprosessin aikana myös IC-SID2013:n osallistuville tehtyjä palautekyselyitä ja SWOT-keskusteluita käytettiin hyödyksi.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tutkimusprosessin aikana tuli ilmi, että Britta Thege ei tule ottamaan ohjekirjaa käyttöön, sillä hän ei saanut rahoitusta hakemalleen intensiiviohjelmalle. IC-SID2013:n partneriverkosto oli kuitenkin yhtä mieltä siitä, että ohjekirja on tärkeä työkalu kenelle tahansa, joka on aikeissa koordinoida Erasmus-intensiiviohjelmaa tai vastaavaa projektia ensimmäistä kertaa.

Asiasanat: Erasmus, Intensiiviohjelmat, CIMO, Opaskirja

**Laurea University of Applied Sciences** **Abstract**
Leppävaara
Degree Programme in Service Management,
Degree Programme in Hospitality Management

Grön, Emilia; Saarinen, Jenni

**The Process of Creating a Guidebook for a New Erasmus Intensive Programme Coordinator**

Year 2013 Pages 50

Laurea University of Applied Sciences has acted as the lead organizer in numerous Erasmus Intensive Programmes (IP). This experience was seen important to pass on to Intensive Programme coordinators, who are planning to execute their own project for the first time. This thesis focuses on finding the most efficient ways to carry out an Erasmus Intensive Programme.

The purpose of this thesis was to research the best and most efficient ways to carry out an Erasmus funded IP. The purpose was to provide a concrete guidebook that helps a first-time Intensive Programme coordinator to execute their task properly. The guidebook incorporates advice and suggestions and practical guidance within the guidelines that the European Union has set. It is meant to work as a job description.

The theoretical background started with understanding cultural differences and communicating across cultures. Since these Intensive Programmes have participants representing several different nationalities, different cultures and basic communication skills were found as important skills to obtain. Research methods used when finding out the best ways to organize an IP included theme interviews with the representative of the Finnish national agency CIMO and Professor Britta Thege, a first-time Erasmus IP coordinator. Since the authors of this thesis worked as assisting project coordinators in IC-SID2013, which is an IP organized by Laurea, observation was chosen to be the main method. The research process also took advantage of the feedback forms and SWOT discussion made for the participants of IC-SID2013.

During the research process of this thesis, it became evident that the guidebook will not be implemented by Mrs. Thege, since she did not receive funding for her IP application. However, it was agreed among the partner network of IC-SID2013 that the guidebook is an important tool for anyone organizing an Erasmus Intensive Programme or a similar project for the first time and it was therefore executed as originally planned.

Key words: Erasmus, intensive programmes, CIMO, guidebook

Table of contents

# 1 Introduction

This thesis is functional. The process consisted of researching the most practical and effective ways of planning and executing an EU-funded Erasmus Intensive Programme. The thesis focuses on qualitative research methods, such as theme interviews and observation. Managing events and projects from an international viewpoint is the main focus point. As a result, the best practices on how to manage an Intensive Programme are presented. Also, as a result of the research process, a guidebook for the next Erasmus Intensive Programme coordinator was created.

The purpose of the thesis is to provide a concrete guidebook, which will help the next project coordinator of an international Erasmus Intensive Programme to plan and execute their event properly. It holds advice and suggestions, as well as practical information on how to coordinate the Intensive Programme within the European Union guidelines. The thesis provides help for the organizers to orientate to their task and position in the Intensive Programme. The purpose of creating the guidebook is to clarify actions in coordinating an Intensive Programme. The guidebook will be a job description.

In an ideal situation, the output of this thesis is an important tool for anyone organizing an EU-funded, international Intensive Programme or any similar project. The main goal of the thesis is that it will be deployed by a coordinator organizing any similar project. In that way it can be proved that the effort put in it will not be wasted. It is also desirable that the guidebook will truly be an important help when organizing Erasmus Intensive Programmes, especially when doing so for the first time.

The commissioner of this thesis is the IC-SID2013 (Intercultural approaches to service innovation and design- methods 2013) Intensive Programme’s partner network. The representative is Senior Lecturer of Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Ms. Kristina Henriksson. She is the project coordinator of all the EU-funded IC-SID- programmes from years 2011-2013. Ms. Henriksson wanted to circulate the responsibility of the project coordinator. Thus the project consortium decided amongst the partner network, that after the lifecycle of IC-SID has ended, the next Erasmus Intensive Programme coordinator is Kiel University of Applied Sciences (Kiel UAS) in Germany.

During the thesis process it occurred that the new PHATSID Intensive Programme application did not get the funding from the National Agency of Germany, DAAD. However, the guidebook, which will be produced as an output of this thesis, can be used by all coordinators who are planning to organize a similar project.

# 2 Operational environment

The operational environment of this thesis consists of the partner network of the Intensive Programme and the European Union. Also the commissioner of this thesis, Kristina Henriksson, was part of the operational environment since she also acted as a mentor in the process. The case of this thesis is a new Intensive Programme called Promoting Healthy Aging through Service Innovation and Design 2014, i.e. PHATSID.

## 2.1 The European Union

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic alliance between its member countries. The EU's predecessor the European Economic Community (EEC) was first founded in 1958. In the beginning it was only an economical alliance between 6 countries. In 1993 the name was changed to European Union. Nowadays EU consists of 27 member countries and is still growing. Behind EU's principles, there is the constitutional state's philosophy. (CIMO 2013.)

The EU consists of many different organs, which all have their own duties. The executive body of the EU is the European Commission, which also promotes interests of all member countries. Members of the European Commission are selected by the governments of the member countries, and each country has one commissioner. The Commission proposes new legislations, which are then adopted by the council and the parliament. The Commission also monitors that the new regulations are implemented properly. (EU 2013.)

The Commission also grants funding for different projects in different policy areas. The financial support is often granted in the areas such as research, transport and energy, and education and training. Almost twenty percent of the EU's budget goes directly from the Commission's financial grants. In education and culture the Commission has different programmes which it supports financially. (EU 2013.)

Life Long Learning Programme (LLP) is one of the granted programmes in the policy area of education and training. It is important since one of the missions the European Commission has is "to reinforce and promote lifelong learning" (CIMO 2013). The LLP covers educational and training initiatives, and its objective is "to enable individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe" (CIMO 2013). LLP consists of different sub-programmes which all have their own focus groups. Some examples of those sub-programmes are Erasmus for higher education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational learning and Comenius for school education. The commission ensures the overall implementation of the programme, but in addition, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the member countries' national agencies are responsible of certain parts of the programme. (EU 2013.)

All countries involved in LLP have their own national agencies taking care of the management. In addition to EU member countries also Turkey, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, The Republic of Croatia and Switzerland are part of the LLP. Considering this thesis, the most important national agencies are Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) in Finland and Nationale Agentur für EU Hochschulzusammenarbeit Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst e. V. (DAAD) in Germany. (EU 2013.)

Erasmus is European Union's (EU) exchange and cooperation programme for Higher Education. Erasmus supports student and teacher exchange and cooperation between universities and universities of applied sciences (UAS). Universities and UASes need to be part of Erasmus to be able to get support and funding. To be accepted as part of Erasmus, a university must apply for Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), which is a declaration for the university to follow the principles of Erasmus. The European Commission grants ECHE. (CIMO 2013.)

Erasmus Intensive Programmes are short study units, which aim to enhance education and to encourage higher education to teach special subjects between different education areas. Because of the Intensive Programmes, students and teachers have the chance to work in a multicultural environment. The Intensive Programmes have criteria they need to meet. An Intensive Programme must last a minimum of ten days and a maximum of six weeks. There has to be at least three higher education institutes from three different countries and the minimum amount of student participants is ten. The course must also be compensated to the students' own degrees. It is also important that Intensive Programmes support innovations and exploit ICT tools. It is only possible to organize the same Intensive Programme three times in a row. However, the funding must be applied every year. (CIMO 2013.)

The applications of the Intensive Programmes are handed in during spring time each year. After the application period ends, the applications go through a qualitative assessment by external experts. After the best applications are selected for funding, the Grant agreements are signed. The funding of the Erasmus Intensive Programmes consists of travel costs, accommodation and subsistence costs and organizational costs. (CIMO 2013.)

Organizational costs are given to all funded Intensive Programmes, and in Finland the amount is solid 8 570 euros. According to the interview with Mrs. Outi Jäppinen, organizational costs are meant to cover all extra expenses, including planning and evaluation meetings, excursions and dinners. Receipts and tickets in organizational costs are not checked and the only requirement is that the Intensive Programme is organized according to the original plan.

According to CIMO (2013) travel costs cover travelling to and from the country where the Intensive Programme is organized. Travel costs do not include the expenses of the organizing university's or UAS's students and teachers. A maximum amount of 75% is covered of the travel expenses, including all ways of travelling from the place of origin to the venue. Travel costs are also meant to cover visa expenses. Accommodation and subsistence costs are determined by the daily and weekly country based tariffs for teachers and students. The rate depends on the country where the Intensive Programme takes place in. Accommodation and subsistence costs are meant to cover accommodation, food and local transportation in the venue.

## 2.2 The partner network

The partner network of PHATSID consists of six partner universities. Before PHATSID, three of the universities have been working together in two different kind of Erasmus Intensive Programmes. Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Laurea), Kiel University of Applied Sciences (Kiel UAS) and University of Economy in Bydgoszcz (WSG) have all been part of PIM (Promoting Intercultural Management for Working Life in the Baltic Sea Region) and IC-SID (Intercultural Approaches to Service Innovation and Design Methods). The cooperation originally started in 2005. The other three universities in the partner network of PHATSID are NHL University of Applied Sciences (NHL), Coventry University and University of the Balearic Islands (UIB).

Laurea has been the coordinating institute in all PIM and IC-SID Intensive Programmes. Kristina Henriksson, a senior lecturer from Laurea University of Applied Sciences, has acted as a project coordinator through all of them. For the six previous Intensive Programmes, the funding has been received from the Finnish national agency, CIMO.

In 2014, Kiel UAS will be coordinating the new project. The application was handed in to the Germany's national agency, DAAD. The new project coordinator of the Intensive Programme is Professor Britta Thege, who has been part of the planning and executing in previous IC-SID Intensive Programmes.

The PHATSID Intensive Programme was designed by three partner universities; Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Kiel University of Applied Sciences and the University of Economy in Bydgoszcz. During the development process it was discussed that it is good to have only a few partner universities included in the Intensive Programme. In the previous Intensive Programme PIM, there were numerous partner universities in the end and sometimes it was hard to arrange certain matters. All three of these universities have got a lot of experience from Intensive Programmes by working together for over 8 years.

## 2.3 Intercultural Approaches to Service Innovation and Design Methods 2013

The authors of this thesis have been working as project assistants in the intensive programme Intercultural Approaches to Service Innovation and Design Methods (IC-SID). The intensive programme included universities from Finland, Estonia, Germany and Poland. In the year 2013 IC-SID was already arranged for the third time, which is the maximum limit for arranging the same intensive programme.

IC-SID2013 was organized in Leicester, England. In most cases, the Intensive Programmes take place in one of the participating countries, and only very few are permitted to be arranged in other countries. In this case, the fact that the service culture is very different in England in comparison to any other of the participating countries was the biggest reason to arrange the event in England. England is also a very multicultural country compared to those of the participating universities, and therefore the intercultural approach also emerged. In the IC-SID Intensive Programme, the participating students cooperated with local companies in their project work. The project assistants had contacted the companies beforehand and arranged the meetings between the students and the case companies.

The latest Intensive Programme included 25 students and ten teachers from all participating countries. The project coordinator of the programme was Ms. Kristina Henriksson, and she had three project assistants to carry out the event. The work for the programme took over a year, since the application period ended already in March 2012 and the Intensive Programme was organized in April 2013 and finalized in September 2013. The EU reporting of the project lasted over the summer 2013. The Intensive Programme itself lasted for two weeks, during 7-21 April 2013. The project coordinator and the assistants worked in Finland and were responsible for travel management. The coordinating team also took care of the communication between all the participants, including local companies in England. Also documentation of meetings, budgeting, conference services and EU documentation were included in their responsibilities.

### 2.4 Promoting Healthy Aging Through Service Innovation and Design 2014

The guidebook, which is the outcome of this thesis, is especially targeted to the Intensive Programme called Promoting Healthy Aging Through Service Innovation and Design 2014. In this chapter the PHATSID Intensive Programme is introduced.

The Erasmus Intensive Programme PHATSID is meant to focus on elderly services. The meaning of the Intensive Programme is to provide international students with an opportunity to study service innovation and design methods applied to pensioners’ health services in Palma, Mallorca. The focus point of the Intensive Programme is diversity. The target group of the student projects is non-Spanish elderly people who choose to live a part of the year in Palma, Mallorca. The student projects focus on health services that are provided for these elderly people. The students are meant to innovate and improve existing health services. Since the non-Spanish elderly people who live part of the year in Palma are a great income for the island, it is important to improve their services.

The PHATSID Intensive Programme is organized in Palma de Mallorca. The location was selected due to the fact that a lot of elderly people from other European countries live in Palma, especially during the winter season. It was also a logical choice due to the fact that the University of the Balearic Islands, which is located in Palma, is one of the partners in the Intensive Programme.

### 2.5 Mentoring

A mentor is a guide who helps the mentee to find the right direction to their work. Mentors have usually had similar experiences on the issues the mentee is working on, and thus holds the empathy and understanding of them. The mentor provides help for the mentee in believing in themselves and decreasing their confidence. He/she also mentor provides support and guidance while challenging and asking questions. (Ragins & Kram 2007, 21-25.) Kristina Henriksson, senior lecturer from Laurea University of Applied Sciences, acted as a mentor for the researchers throughout the thesis process and provided with valuable information. Ms. Henriksson has worked as a project coordinator in several Intensive Programmes since 2006. She was also the project coordinator of IC-SID2013, and held the knowledge of organizing and managing an Erasmus Intensive Programme. Ms. Henriksson's guidance and help was imperative in order to have the information needed to support the research. Her knowledge and experience in organizing Intensive Programmes provided a practical viewpoint on managing an international event.

Mentoring is a method in which experiential information is passed on to gain knowledge and development. The meaning of mentoring is to provide experiences, visions and know-how. It is a relationship which is based on openness and dialogues between the mentor and the ones being mentored. Mentoring is a process of transforming information, social capital and psychosocial support unformally. A mentor holds more information than the target person. Trust is the base of a good mentoring relationship. The mentor needs to hold the information required for fulfilling the needs of the mentoring relationship. In order for the mentoring to be successful and gain qualified results, commitment, time and professional take on the process should be obtained. (Lawson 2009, 34-37) Ms. Henriksson's role was professional, and she ensured that the researchers were committed during the process.

People benefiting from mentoring are somehow part of the mentoring process. Those can be the participants of the mentoring process as well as the organization in which the mentoring takes place. Also, the mentor him/herself can benefit from acting as a mentor. (Lawson 2009, 6-9.) In this research process the facets benefitting from mentoring were not only the researchers themselves, but also the whole organization and the operational environment. Ms. Henriksson has a vast knowledge in managing and organizing large-scale, international Intensive Programmes. Through her mentoring throughout the process, the whole organization involved in the research process gained valuable knowledge. According to Lawson (2009, 16-22), the benefits of using mentoring include combining professional and personal development, an active and practical way of working and adjusting to different kinds of environments and taking their characteristics into notice. All of these benefits were accomplished during the mentoring process.

Since the researchers cooperated with the mentor, Ms. Henriksson, throughout the process of planning and organizing IC-SID2013, a lot of information was received on Erasmus Intensive Programmes. The researchers held weekly meetings with the mentor to check if all the tasks involved in the planning and organizing of the event were done. Also, the next stages of the process were discussed. These meetings were the main source of information during the process of IC-SID2013 and one example of meeting minutes is attached to this thesis (attachment 1). Also, the process of which actions need to be taken during different stages of the process, could be interpreted and used when creating the guidebook for the next Intensive Programme coordinator.

## 2.6 Coaching

Since coaching is close to mentoring, as it also has a mentor and a mentee, i.e. a coach and the person to be coached, it was used as one of the methods to support the thesis. Coaching was used to help to discover more and better ways to organize an Intensive Programme. In this case Ms. Henriksson acted as the coach, and Ms. Saarinen and Ms. Grön were the ones to be coached. Coaching was a natural choice for one of the methods, since Ms. Henriksson was responsible on teaching and guiding the researchers through IC-SID2013. The results gained from the coaching process can be seen in the Conclusions-chapter.

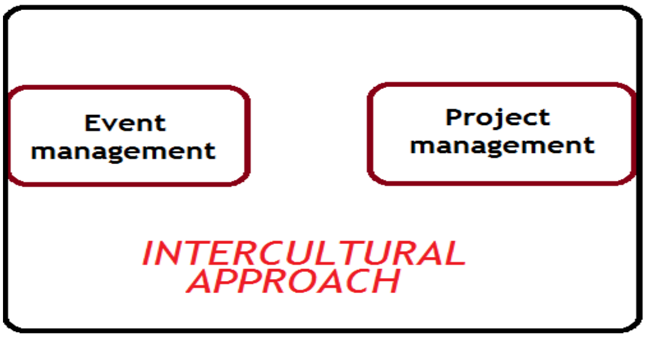
There are several different ways that coaching can be used, and in this case business coaching was used to support the existing research methods. Business coaching is a way of coaching that focuses on the individualistic needs of the person coached. It concentrates on reaching the goals in business life as well as enhancing personal development in the working environment. Business coaching consists of two parts, structure and dialogue, which the communication between the coach the person coached is based on (Parppei 2008, 3). Business coaching is meant to push the person coached even more and develop their business to be as best as possible.

In this research, the goals were determined by what information the researchers wished to gain from the process when working as assistants during IC-SID2013. The main objective was to gather information and knowledge that supports the results gained from the mentoring process. Also, good practices that resulted from the whole research process of this thesis, were gathered through the coaching. The personal goal of the researchers for the coaching process was to gain enough experience and know-how to be able to advice the next intensive programme coordinator on how the IP is executed in real life. According to Parppei (2008), the coaching process includes both structure and dialogue. In this case the structure was formed naturally, since it followed the order of the actions taking place in IC-SID2013. Dialogue between the coach and the assistants that were ones coached, was constant and took place almost daily. The dialogue worked both ways, as in the researchers were able to ask questions and express their opinions during the process, as well as the coach, Ms. Henriksson. Also, constructive criticism could be handed both ways. The well-working dialogue was the core of the whole coaching process.

# 3 The foundation of the research process

The theory base for this research consisted of two main focus points, event management and project management. Since the Intensive Programme is both a large event and a project that needs to be carried out, research on both of the subjects needed to be done. Intercultural approach in both event and project management was selected due to the fact that all Erasmus Intensive Programmes, as well as  the next one, will have several nationalities represented amongst the participants. Also, research on handling the basics of communication and understanding different cultures, was needed in order to gain enough knowledge to be able to organize and execute an event in an intercultural context.

In this chapter, first the intercultural perspective on how to organize an Intensive Programme, is introduced. After that project and event management are introduced by applying them in to organizing an Intensive Programme.




Picture 1:Theory base

### 3.1 Cultural perspective on how to organize an intensive programme

Since the next Erasmus Intensive Programme will have several countries represented, internationality must be considered as an aspect. Knowing how to manage a group in an intercultural environment is essential for the Intensive Programme's success. Several different cultures will be represented on behalf of the participating univeristies. Also, the learning environment of the programme will be in a location that is not familiar to most of the paricipants. That is why it is important to acknowledge the importance of taking other cultures and internationality into consideration. According to Liu & others (2011, 89-90), "Culture plays a key role in influencing what information we select from available external stimuli, how we structure the incoming information, and the meanings we assign to the processed information."

#### 3.1.1 Understanding different cultures

This research has to take different cultures into consideration. When dealing with participants that are not familiar with each other beforehand, some basic information on how to act polite without insulting any other culture, is needed. When discussing with the mentor of the thesis, it was decided that it is important to own these kinds of skills to be able to prevent conflicts amongst the participants. First, the basic aspect of understanding what culture is, is introduced.

Culture can be defined in many different ways, and it can be divided into different categories depending on what kind of viewpoint it is considered in. When considering culture as a large concept, it is highlighted that culture is comprehensive. Culture can be defined as an area of humane actions. It does not exist in nature, only amongst people and societies. Culture defines the values, behavior and the way of thinking of an individual. (Kulttuuri käsitteenä 2013.)

Culture can be both individual and collective. Individual culture is dominant in Western countries, and it enhances the fact that people are detached individuals. The goal in an individual culture environment is to grow independent and enhance and develop the uniqueness of an individual. In this kind of culture existing in Western countries, children are held as equal to adults, and their independency is encouraged. On the other hand, in a collective culture, which is a non-Western culture, the fact that people are dependent on others, is accentuated. In this kind of collective culture family is a broad concept, and does not include only siblings and parents, but everyone involved in raising a person. (Kulttuuri käsitteenä 2013).

According to Trompenaars and Woolliams (2004, 31-59), there are seven dimensions in culture that can help to understand differences between cultures. Because each culture has its own way of thinking, ethics and values, the differences in different cultures can be specified through these seven dimensions. These dimensions are: Universalism versus particularism, individualism versus communitarianism, specific versus diffuse, neutral versus emotional, achievement versus ascription, sequential time versus synchronous time and internal direction versus outer direction. In a universalistic culture, people obey their rules and regulations.

In an ideal situation, everyone belonging to the community is treated fairly. However, in a universalistic environment, rules are prior to relationships. In a culture where particularism is dominant, "People believe that each circumstance, and each relationship, dictates the rules that they live by. " They also may change the way they react to different things depending on the actions and the people involved at the moment. In a culture that enhances individualism, people embrace the thought that they make their own decisions. They also believe in personal freedom and that they must take care of themselves. People, whose culture is marked by communitarianism, think that the group is prior to the individual, and that the group always comes before the individual, providing safety and help. (Guirdham 1999, 55-58.)

In a culture where specific overrules diffuse dimension, people separate their work and personal life, and tend to think that relationships don't have an impact on their work, whereas people living in a diffuse culture, overlap relationships and work. They also spend time with their colleagues outside work. People living in a neutral environment try to control their emotions, and don't usually reveal their feelings and thoughts to others. In cultures that have an emotional dimension, it is considered normal to express ones emotions even spontaneously. In a culture where characteristics matter, people evaluate each other according to their achievements and performance. If a culture is ascription-orientated, people value each other for who they are. In a sequential time perception, it is common that punctuality and sticking to plans and schedules, is highly valuated. When the outlook of time is synchronous, people tend to take views and plans as flexible, and tend to be involved in several projects at a time. In an internal-oriented culture, it is believed that people can control the environment, also in their teams and organizations, to achieve their goals. If the culture is external-orientated, people work together with their environment in order to achieve their goals. They try to avoid conflicts and to focus on other people in their relationships. (Guirdham 1999, 55-58.)

### 3.1.2 Communicating across cultures

When working with people representing different cultures, information on how to communicate in a correct way, needs to be known. The basic ways of communication must be known in order to understand how to act in an intercultural environment. There are eight basic components from which communication consists of. These components, which are source, message, channel, receiver, encoding, decoding, noise, and feedback, can be found in every culture. (Liu et al. 2011, 35.)

Source is the origin of information. It can be defined as a person who has the will and need to exchange information with other people. There are different needs that the source may have, such as seeking information, sharing experiences or accomplishing tasks. The needs can also be non-conscious, such as reacting to sounds or other people's opinions. Message is the form in which a person needs or wants to communicate to others. It has a specific time, place and context. It can be in a verbal or non-verbal form that is expressed through ideas, thoughts and feelings. Channel is the way in which the message is sent to others. The primary channels are sound and sight, but the channels can vary depending on the culture. Receiver is the target of the message. It is the person who acknowledges the message and is therefore linked to the source. Encoding is used by the source to convert their concepts, thoughts and feelings into a message. It is the source's internal process, and thus not visible to others. Decoding is used by the receiver to convert the message back into meaning. When decoding, the receiver automatically attaches a meaning to the source's behavior. Noise is the factor that distracts the message. All factors that disrupt the information from being transferred, can be defined as noise. It can be physical, psychological or semantic. Feedback is the response that the receiver gives after having had a message received. Feedback is generated by the receiver and made available to the source, and immediately the source is able to judge the communication while it is taking place. (Liu et al. 2001, 35-38.)

Effective communication is needed for goal-directed working. That is why every organization, needs to have communication plan. The communication plan can also be called as an official communication system. The purpose of an official communication system is to support the organization in getting in to the goals that are set. Also, it is meant to get the members of the organization to work for the goals. There are five reasons listed in the book Pidä projekti hallinnassa why a working community communicates. First of all, the communication supports the actions and profiles the working community. It is also used for sharing information and acquainting new employees. It is also important, since people are socially active and they need communication to fulfill their social needs. (Ruuska 2012, 84-86.)

### 3.2 Project management

Project management is an essential part of organizing an Intensive Programme. Briefly, a project can be a group of people and other resources, which are collected together to carry out a specific job.  The Intensive Programme PHATSID fulfills almost all of the definitions that a project should. It has definite starting and ending points, the Intensive Programme takes place only once, it has a budget and the scope is clearly defined (Heagney 2012, 2.)

J.M. Juran has said that “a project is a problem scheduled for solution” (Heagney, 2012). Juran’s words can be explained by the fact that a project is often started because there is a problem to be solved. The problem can be positive or negative, but it is always there. In the case of the Intensive Programme there are a lot of different problems. The European Commission does have reasons why it refunds these Intensive Programmes. With Erasmus the Commission wants to encourage the European universities to cooperate together and that is one of the problems. They also want to equalize studies and qualifications in universities throughout the European Union. (CIMO, 2013.) Also, the Intensive Programme intends to get the students to learn how to work in a multicultural environment, which is one reason why Intensive Programmes are organized.

Karlsson and Marttala explain a project in five different stages. First of these stages is figuring out, which means that the problem is analyzed. The meaning of this stage is that the situation is examined freely, but no solution is suggested yet. The second stage is to choose the destination. In this stage a few different solutions are suggested and analyzed carefully. After this, one of the suggestions is chosen and will be in the bottom of every decision in the future. In stage three the implementation is planned. All the parts of the project are thought trough; essential matters, know-how needed and the methods that will be used. In this stage the preliminary implementation plan is produced. In stage four, the implementation plan is executed. In the fifth and the last stage the results of a project are handed over. A project does not usually follow these stages perfectly, but fulfills only part of the stages. (Karlsson and Marttala 2001, 17.)

It is important that especially the project manager is aware of all the documentation needed in the project. The documentation must be clear, and the most important thing is to keep the documentation in order. There are always some changes in the process and some documentation must be revised. When revising documents, it is important to put the information needed to the name of the document. The information needed in revising is the updating date and the initials of the person who has made the changes. This way it is easier to keep up if any problems occur. Besides the good documentation customs, it is also important to inform all people who are affected by the changes about the new documentation. (Clements and Gido 2006, 379.) This has been a good custom already in the IC-SID- intensive programme and should be noted also in PHATSID.

### 3.2.1 Project planning

Project planning is important, but it must be suitable for the purpose. There should not be any more planning than is necessary in order to accomplish the project. It is also not necessary to set a specific plan for the whole project in the very beginning, since it is a time wasted. Situations change all the time and it is important to update the plan because of that. (Ruuska 2012, 177.)

Creating a project plan is important because it is meant to describe how the wanted outcome will be gained. It also helps to follow and monitor the process. It will also be important to have a plan for the Intensive Programme, especially when the new coordinator does not have any experience of leading this kind of a project.

Every project has a project life cycle to follow. The life cycle can be divided into four phases. A project starts when a need, problem or opportunity is identified. In the PHATSID case this would be an opportunity to arrange an Intensive Programme. The second phase is to “develop a proposed solution” (Clements 2006, 9). In the PHATSID project, developing a solution means planning the application for the Germany’s National Agency DAAD and handing it in. In the third phase the project is performed. This is the longest part of the project life cycle. In PHATSID this part starts after the national agency has accepted the application. In Intensive Programmes the implementation of the project can last over a year. This phase includes detailed planning of the project and also implementing the project plan to accomplish the project objective. The consortium of the Intensive Programme plans the project together with the project coordinator. The fourth phase of the project life cycle is terminating the project. This means that the Intensive Programme has been arranged and the project coordinator starts writing the EU report. This phase includes feedback from the customers, whom in this case are students and teachers. (Clements 2006, 9-10.)

According to Ruuska (2007, 188), without Christmas and Midsummer no project would ever be completed. This refers to the fact that it is hard to estimate the workload. The workload has to be estimated because no one can see in to the future. Estimating must be done by experts and usually the best estimator is the employees working in the project. Because nothing is certain in project management, the estimating of the workload can even at best be just an educated guess. The quality of the estimation depends on the experience the estimator has. (Ruuska 2007, 188.)

### 3.2.2 Project coordinator

A project coordinator or a manager is responsible for the whole project, and their main job is to enable the work for the project team. The project coordinator is the one who ensures that the project sticks to the schedule, does not exceed the budget and that the scope stays clear within the whole process. The coordinator helps the team to get the project completed and provides resources for them. As a leader, the project manager also protects the working team from outside forces. (Heagney 2012, 5&24.)

To be able to succeed in managing a project, the coordinator must know his/her place and responsibilities. The project manager is not there to do the work, but to lead. Even if the co-ordinator would be an expert in a particular area, it is not their responsibility to work on it. If the coordinator did work in the project, it would take a lot of time from managing, and the project wouldn't succeed. (Heagney 2012, 27.)

The most important skills that a project manager needs are people skills. That is why it is important that leadership and management skills are needed. Leadership is explained in Heagney's book (2012, 5) to be the "art of getting others to want to do something that you believe should be done". So, leadership considers managing people and management means managing other resources.

The project coordinator is responsible of the project planning, but is not able to do it completely alone. The team working in the project must be taken along in the planning part. There are always problems, because the coordinator cannot know everything. "The people who must do the work should help to plan it" (Heagney 2012, 5.) In the PHATSID project, the coordinator has to plan the intensive programme in cooperation with the project assistants and the teachers. Because there are a lot of people from different countries, it is good to arrange a planning meeting early before the intensive programme starts, when teachers from all participating universities get together at a pre-approved destination. This has also been a practise in the IC-SID -intensive programmes. A good practise is also to arrange regular online meetings during the months before the intensive programme, where the planning can also take place.

## 3.3 Event management

Event management was chosen to be a part of the theory base due to the fact that PHATSID is a large, international event. Its coordinator needs to have enough information on how to plan and execute these kinds of events in order for the programme to gain success. A vast knowledge on managing events in an international environment is essential to be able to deliver the process from the beginning to the end professionally.

Events can be divided into different categories based on the purpose of the event (Silvers 2012, 3). This research focused on meeting and convention, i.e conference events, which is, according to Silvers (2012, 4) an " assembly of people for the purpose of exchanging information, debate or discussion, consensus or decision, education, and relationship building, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events." Erasmus Intensive Programmes are held for educational meanings, but also for exchanging information between the participants and gaining international experience.

### 3.3.1 Event planning

Erasmus Intensive Programmes are large, international events. That is why knowledge on event management is needed when acting as a coordinator. When starting to plan an event, answers to questions what, when and where, need to be defined (Vallo and Häyrinen 2012, 138). The first thing to do is to come up with the idea of the event. Behind every event, there is an idea, how to get people together. (Parry B. and Shone A. 2010, 71.)

In order for an event to gain success, its objectives need to be defined. The objectives can be either qualitative or quantitative, or include both. Quantitative objectives may include, for instance, gaining as much profit as possible. Qualitative objectives are related to feelings, thoughts and emotions during and after the event. (Raj et al. 2010, 10-11.)

The objectives of the PHATSID are mainly qualitative. Because Intensive Programmes are not pursuing to yield profits, the only quantitative thing is the ECTS points the students get. All Intensive Programmes aim to increase multicultural communication and cooperation between partner universities. The PHATSID Intensive Programme aims to provide an international group of students a chance to study service innovation and design in the area of pensioners' health services.

Besides determining the event's goals and objectives and the idea of the event, there are five other stages when planning an event. Those are feasibility study, implementation requirements, implementation plan, monitoring and evaluation, and future and practice. When planning a conference event, there are specific aspects that need to be taken into consideration. First of all, a feasibility study must take place in order to evaluate if the event can be put to practice or not. Also, potential risks and effects for the overall business should be considered, as well as assessing the level of risk for each section of the event. (Raj et al. 2010, 28-30.)

Financial management is also in a really important role when creating an event. Already in the planning phase of the event, the disposable amount of money must be known. Because there is never money unlimitedly, a budget must be done. It is also important that the objectives of the event are clear, so that the financial part of the planning will be easier to build, and the money will be used within the guidelines. Creating a budget is part of a good financial management of the event. Usually someone who has knowledge and experience on financial management is responsible of creating the budget. At simplest, the budget can be just a list of incomes and costs. When creating a budget for an event, it must be recognized that an event does not make a profit. (Parry 2010, 105-108.) In the Intensive Programmes the budget is clearly stated already in the application. The national agencies provide a handbook for the coordinator, which includes all basic regulations. This book clarifies the guidelines given by the European Commission.

### 3.3.2 Implementing an event

In the very beginning of an event, a graphic design and marketing materials need to be created. They include a logo, the outlook of the webpages and all handouts and posters. When designing the look of the marketing material, the outcome should give a clear view of the event and its objectives. (Event management guide 2013.) In an Erasmus Intensive Programme, the logos used are strictly defined by the European Union. A Lifelong Learning Programme logo should be used in all material used to marketing the event. Also, the logos of the participating universities should be introduced in the marketing material.

Picture 2: Official LLP logo

When marketing an event, the target group and the objectives of the event need to be considered. A marketing plan includes internal marketing which means informing within the organization, press reporting, media marketing which can happen in newspapers, TV or Internet and direct marketing to the target group (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 55-56.) During IC-SID2013, almost all of the aspects of a marketing plan were used. Internal marketing was used to inform the participating partners on the event and its schedule, media marketing was used to get more visibility for the event, Internet marketing (mainly in social media) was used to attract the target group, and also direct marketing was used in the form of emails directly to the target group. Internal marketing mostly happened via email, due to the fact that all the participating teachers lived in different countries. Also, Adobe connect pro, which is a virtual meeting room, was used to hold regular meetings and to inform the participants about upcoming tasks and the state of the event. Media and Internet marketing happened mostly in social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, since the target group mostly use them to communicate. Bambuser, which is an online network that allows its users to send and receive online video streaming, was used. Also, a website, http://www.sidstudies.com, for IC-SID was created already during the first year of the event, and it was updated regularly during 2013. It held all crucial information to all interested in the Intensive Programme. Direct marketing to the target group was executed with posters and marketing events that were held in the premises of Laurea UAS. One of the posters is also attached to this thesis (attachment 2). Also, the assistants marketed thI intensive Programme during study units with the help of a Powerpoint show. Marketing postcards were also handed to the target group.

Erasmus Intensive Programmes are directed for all University and UAS students. The consortium can decide in each Intensive Programme, which is the target group in the specific Intensive Programme. The target universities are determined in the application for the funding from EU. The target group in the PHATSID intensive programme includes students from all participating universities.

### 3.3.3 Event evaluation

Evaluating an event should be constant throughout the process. Monitoring checkpoints and effective feedback systems are needed to really get a good view on how the process is evolving and if it matches the criteria set in the beginning. It is important to regularly check the progress of delegated tasks and to talk to the staff about their jobs and the performance level. It is the event coordinator's responsibility to insure that two-way communication between the participants and the coordinator is implemented, and also that everyone is committed to improvement. (Silvers 2012, 390-391.)

Gathering feedback after an event has many good effects. It helps to determine whether the event has been successful, and if the event was realized in a good way or not. Also, gathering and analyzing the feedback gained from the event carefully, helps to create the foundation for the next event. It can also help in organizing other similar events. Well gathered feedback is useful in personal level as well; it helps to build confidence in event organizing and one has the chance to learn from their strengths and weaknesses. If the goals and objectives of the event are determined properly already in the planning phase, it is easier to decide what kind of feedback is needed from the customers. The goals of the event also help to determine what kind of questions need to be asked in order to gain feedback that helps to evaluate the event properly (Miten tapahtuma arvioidaan? 2013.)

When gathering feedback from an event, the quality and the character of the event play a key role in how and what kind of feedback needs to be collected. The efficiency of collecting and analyzing the event is highlighted even more in a large-scale event, and the simplicity of the feedback questions and the answers should be focused on. The feedback from an event should always be gathered in the same way, especially if the event is organized regularly; that helps the organizers to evaluate the development and the direction where the event is heading to (Miten tapahtuma arvioidaan? 2013.)

After the event is over, a post-marketing stage must take place. It includes memorizing the participants of the event in a way that the participants feel that their effort in the event is appreciated. Post-marketing also holds gathering feedback both from the participants and the people who took part in the organizing of the event. The gathered feedback is important to be analyzed properly; that way the organizer is able to learn from it. Feedback from the event can also be used as a starting point for the next event; it helps the organizer not to repeat the same mistakes. It is important to acknowledge that each event leaves the participant with a memory that either fulfills their expectations or does not. Collecting feedback is needed in order to know if the expectations are met (Vallo and Häyrinen 2012, 180-184.)

After IC-SID2013 was held, the participating students were supported via email, and a thank you-letter was sent to all the participants. Also, the organizing university kept in touch and answered questions for the students even after the event. When it comes to teachers of IC-SID2013, they also received a thank you-letter, and were able to receive support after the event. Feedback was gathered during the event with a mid-term questionnaire in the middle of the Intensive Programme, as well as in the very end both from the students and the teachers. The feedback forms were composed and analyzed. Also, discussions on how the Intensive Programmme succeeded in the students' viewpoint were held. The discussions took place on the final day of IC-SID2013 in small groups. The discussions were recorded, and a SWOT-analysis was made on the basis of them. The advantages in this kind of a process are that all the students get to comment all matters. For example, unsolved problems can be cleared. The participating teachers also held an evaluation meeting that included evaluating all the previous IC-SID Intensive Programmes. The results were gathered and minutes were made from the meeting.

# 4 Good practices gained from previous researches

CIMO has gathered a lot of useful information from intensive programme coordinators in order to help new coordinators to achieve their goals in organizing intensive programmes. CIMO has collected the best advices to their webpages (CIMO 2013). This advice is noted in the guidebook.

The Erasmus Intensive Programme coordinators are experts in organizing the programmes. For that reason it is smart to use their experiences to assist the new coordinators. This advice came out in the discussion where experienced intensive programme coordinators discussed good practices. The first subject area was about teachers and teaching methods. The coordinators agreed that it is good to connect the IP into a bigger development process. In the intensive course, it is good that not just the students, but also the teachers, can learn from it. This results in gaining more expertise and outcomes from an IP. Intensive programmes are also a good opportunity to test new teaching methods and models. If teaching models turn out to be successful, all partners can benefit and use them in their own universities. It is also beneficial that teachers have different know-how, because that way they complete each other and are able to solidify their cooperation. Also, using a sort of Moodle- system is desirable for saving all the lecture materials. For example in IC-SID2013, the Optima platform was in use and all the students had access to the lecture materials. (CIMO 2013.)

In the partner cooperation the experienced coordinators highlight the importance of networking and communication. Especially the preliminary meeting is in an important role when considering a successful IP. (CIMO 2013.) Also Outi Jäppinen, brought up in her interview that it is important to meet the partners face to face even before the IP, since it is always different to meet the people you are going to work with, than just to discuss with them via internet. Of course, the online meetings are important during the planning phase, whether the meetings are in Skype, Connect Pro or in another portal. It is essential that meetings are held regularly, and as many are able to participate as possible. When considering the partner network and the cooperation between partners, the most important thing is that the work division is clear. It is important that the roles and responsibilities are agreed in advance. There is also a possibility to make a partner agreement, which declares the rights and responsibilities, work and money division and money transactions of the partners. However, it is not compulsory. (CIMO 2013.)

In the administration of the IP it is good to remember that even though the rules are quite flexible, it is still good to use common sense. The coordinators also agree that it relieves the workload, when there are lists of what to do and what to worry in different stages. These lists should be upheld all the time. When organizing IPs the stages mentioned are planning, preparing, implementing and finalizing. The planning stage covers writing of the application, because the whole process has to be planned before handing in the application. Preparing covers the actions between the time when the application has been approved and the starting point of the IP. The stage also includes the preliminary meeting and all online meetings before the intensive programme starts. Also, all preparations including travel management, venue management and food supplies are covered in the preparing stage. In a case where the IP is organized in a country where none of the partner universities is located, the location has to be well justified in the application. In a case like this, all the teachers and students are equal and the studying is more rounded. Because all of the students are away from home and in a new situation and environment, they are more engaged to the projects than they would be in someone's home university. (CIMO 2013.)

Jäppinen says in the interview that when choosing students for the intensive programme, it is good to have a waiting list in case of one of the selected students cannot participate in the programme after all. Especially in a situation where the intensive programme is organized with the minimum requirements and there are only ten students participating, the waiting list is essential. In addition to waiting list, the experienced coordinators (CIMO 2013) agree that it is also good to arrange a possibility for the students to meet each other before the IP. This can be arranged for example by blogs or other online services. Attention has to be paid also to the students teaming up both in their home countries and in the IP. The study groups are also important.

According to the discussion of the coordinators, (CIMO 2013) it is a good idea to let the students themselves come up with social activities. One alternative is also to let tourism students develop social activities as a study project. The researchers observed also that one option is to let the assistants plan and organize the social activities. For example in IC-SID2013 the assistants created activities for the first day and after that let the students create activities in their project teams for other days. Students can also stay somewhere at the countryside for example in a cottage, or almost anywhere independently in the weekend between the intensive weeks. This decreases the accommodation costs a little.

# 5 Research methods, implementation and results

The selection of methods for this research was made on the basis which are the most useful and the ones that give enough information in order for the result to be successful and reliable. All of the research methods used were qualitative, since the research focused on finding the best ways to organize the next Intensive Programme. A table of the methods used is showed in picture 3.

| The used method | Goal of the method | How it was used |
|---|---|---|
| Observation | To gain practical knowledge on how to organize an Intensive Programme. | Participant observation during IC-SID2013, from October 2012 to June 2013. |
| Theme interview | To find out the expectations of the new IP coordinator, and to receive more information on the EU guidelines and restrictions. | Interviews with the next IP co-ordinator and Senior Programme Advisor of the national agency, CIMO. |
| Feedback forms of IC-SID2013 | To have the participants' viewpoint on what matters were well organized, and what could be improved. | Taking advantage of two feedback forms and their results made for the participants of IC-SID2013. |

Picture 3 Table of the methods

The main method chosen was observation. Observation was chosen due to the fact that the researchers were both working as assisting project coordinators in IC-SID2013, which was a similar two-week Erasmus funded Intensive Programme as PHATSID2014. The process of the two Intensive Programmes is alike due to the guidelines and restrictions from the European Union, and thus the research could benefit from the observation process done during IC-SID2013. Theme interview was chosen to get more detailed information and also the viewpoint from experts in certain areas. The researchers also took advantage of the feedback forms collected from the students and teachers participating in IC-SID2013. The feedback forms were not created to support this particular thesis, but they gave a good viewpoint on the issues that that Intensive Programme participants found functional, and what could be improved.

In this chapter, the three used methods are introduced. Also the implementation and the outcomes of the research methods used are introduced. It was agreed that all methods used fulfilled the goals that were set, and provided qualitative information that could be used when finding out the best practices when coordinating an IP. The conclusions of the methods are introduced in the same order as they are described in the previous chapter; first observation, second theme interviews and finally the feedback forms.

Due to a request from the commissioner of this thesis, most of the materials used in the process and implementation of the methods, will not be published. However, the materials are undergone in the text.

### 5.1 Observation

Observation was the most obvious research method to be chosen, since the practical side of organizing and realizing an international Intensive Programme was present for the researchers during a nine month period. The researchers were part of organizing and impelementing IC-SID2013 from October 2012 to June 2013. The pros for this kind of observation are that the researchers get a real point of view of what actually happens during organizing this kind of a programme. Observation as a research method also gave the researchers a more practical grip on the subject. Having already experienced the process of creating an Intensive Programme from an international point of view and observing it the whole time, it was easier to understand the cycle of a project similar to IC-SID2013. Also, when wanting to know detailed information on a subject that has many dimensions, observation is a good, and in some cases the only reliable, option. (Aaltola and Valli 2010, 157-158.)

When having used observation as a research method, attention to the way of observing had to be paid. According to Aaltola and Valli (2010, 154-158), all human senses must be used to receive information and to divide it into scientifical results. Also, the fact that the interaction between the researcher and the subject being researched works both ways, (Aaltola and Valli 2010,154) had to be remembered.

Observation as a method can be used both in qualitative and quantitative research. In this case, it was used to support the qualitative research. Observation can be divided into four different dimensions, which are: Participant and non-participant, obtrusive and non-obtrusive, structured and non-structured observation and observation in natural settings and in contrived settings. In this research, participant observation was used. It means that the researchers were involved in the observation process themselves. Participant observation can be very challenging, since the researchers must be accepted as a part of the group that is being observed. That is why it typically requires a great amount of time to be put into it. (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2008, 86-87.)

In this thesis, the researchers were a part of the IC-SID2013 from the very beginning to the end, so the timeline was determined beforehand. During a nine-month period the researchers were accepted as equal colleagues in the Intensive Programme by the participating partners. The observation was non-obtrusive, since the participants were not aware of being observed. The observation was also executed in natural settings, and no artificial settings were created for it. Non-structured observation was used naturally, since the researchers could not predict how the event would proceed and how the participants would act. Thus, no checklist was made to determine the objects of observation.

When planning to use observation as a research method, the objects of the observation must be chosen in order to get the data needed. Attention to the way the participants communicate not only verbally, but also non-verbally, must be paid. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 87-88.) In the beginning of IC-SID2013, it was decided that the observation should focus on how the Intensive Programme is organized and managed. Also, different ways of communicating between the participating universities was studied. Since the partner universities of IC-SID2013 all came from different European countries, it was decided that intercultural communication and managing an international event would be the main focus point.

According to Eskola and Suoranta (2005, 102-103), there are some risks related to using participating observation. The observer influences the research target even when not wanting to. The prejudices and assumptions that the researchers might have before the observation, also effect on the subjects being observed. The observation process is selective, and not all things can be noticed or not even seen. The observer might not have all relevant information according the observation target, and might miss some essential elements through that. Also, some pre-assumptions related to the observers previous experiences as well as their mentality and mood, have an effect on how the results of the observation turn out.

There are several ways of conducting an observation. The main three types are descriptive, focused and selective observation. In a descriptive observation, everything during the process is observed. The disadvantage of descriptive observation is, that the it can result in information that may not be so relevant for the research. Focused observation is supported by interviews with the participants, in which the participants support the researchers in what to focus on. When using selective observation, the researcher focuses on pre-selected activities to determine the difference between the selected activities. (Participant observation as a data collection method 2005.)

The time used in an observation process can vary anywhere between a few hours to a few years. When observing social situation, field work is recommendable. (Eskola and Suoranta 2005, 102-103.) The researchers found it natural to observe during the nine month period that they worked as project assistants. It was also the time period, when all the crucial actions in organizing the Intensive Programme took part. The application for IC-SID2013 had been approved before the assistants joined the partner network, but they participated in both the planning and executing phase throughout. Field work was also an obvious choice for the observation, since the researchers were a natural part of the working environment. Since the purpose of the observation was to find out good practicalities in organizing an Erasmus-Intensive Programme, the researchers did not have a detailed plan. It was acknowledged that the researchers had no previous experience in working as project assistants, so it was decided that planning and executing the event in an intercultural environment was the main focus point. Also, time management and communication were part of the observation process.

### 5.1.1 Implementation of the observation

The researchers were part of planning and implementing of IC-SID2013 during a nine-month period. That position gave them an excellent opportunity to follow the process of coordinating an IP from a close distance. In the following chapter, the implementation of the observation process is presented.

The observation process was participatory, since the researchers followed the process of organizing an Erasmus Intensive Programme in IC-SID2013 starting from the planning phase in September 2012, until the writing of the final report to the EU was finished. The whole life cycle of an Intensive Programme was followed. The researchers made constant notes using Microsoft Word as their main documentation device. Also, notes were written by hand in a notebook reserved specially for the remarks that came up when not having a computer at hand. It was agreed, that notes should be written at least in the end of every working week. In that way, the researchers were able to keep on track of the schedule and current tasks in different stages of IC-SID2013. The researchers took turns every week to write and summarize their notes. The notes were then verified by the other researcher who didn’t take part in writing the notes during that week. The researchers discussed about the notes after each week, and together decided on what matters would be the most important and useful ones considering the thesis.

During the observation process, the researchers took part in weekly meetings with Ms. Henriksson. The meetings were not designed to support the observation method, but to check if the assistants of IC-SID2013 had done all the current tasks, and to discuss the upcoming tasks and challenges. However, the meetings worked as a good help when considering what practices and ways of performing certain tasks would be necessary for the guidebook to be complete and comprehensive. From each meeting, professional minutes were made and saved by the assistants to follow the tasks on hand. The minutes provided with valuable information when gathering the results of the observation process.

### 5.1.2 Results of the observation process

While observing, the researchers were a part of one possible way to organize an intensive programme. The following ideas offer suggestions of practises that are discovered to be successful in organizing an intensive programme. These are offered for the new coordinator as guidelines that she or he can possibly apply.

Because of the work amount in organizing an intensive programme, the researchers noted that it is helpful to have project assistants working with the intensive programme coordinator in organizing the event. In addition to the help from assistants, it is good to take the partner universities along in the organizing process. It was discovered, that 2-3 assistants is a good amount to have; that way the work load can be divided equally. Below is a table of the responsibilities shared in the organization process between the coordinator, partners and assistants.

| | Project Coordinator | Assistants | Partners |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Responsibilities** | | | |
| Budgeting | X | X | |
| Travel arrangements | X | X | x |
| Marketing | | X | x |
| Webpages | | X | x |
| Organizing accommodation | X | X | x |
| Organizing catering | | X | |
| Dissemination activities | X | | X |

Picture 4: Responsibility table

To be able to coordinate an event as big as intensive programme, the coordinator needs help from the partners and from the assistants. In the responsibility table the responsibilities are shared to all participants. This kind of work division has been noted to be functional in the organizing process. Partners need to take their responsibilities seriously and to invest to the intensive programme also.

During the observation the researchers discovered a few different ways the coordinator can brief the possible assistants into the job. When the assistants are selected, they need to be familiarized with the different aspects of the project. Because there is a lot of information, it is hard to get acquainted with all the facts. However, the first thing to do is to give the new assistants as clear a picture as possible from the whole project and the organization behind it. It was also noted, that having an assistant who has worked in the previous year's project, guiding the new assistants, helped them to get a clearer picture of their work. Also, the previous year's assistant could provide experience and give advice on how the work load could be managed. Especially in the very beginning of the process, she provided the new assistants with practical tips and hints on how to finish certain tasks.

According to the observation, the researchers would recommend the coordinator to first show and explain the big picture briefly. All the information needs to be gathered together, so that the assistants can find the needed information easily when necessary. When working as project assistants, the researchers found it very helpful to use an electronic platform for finding, sharing and saving all crucial information. In this case, a platform called Optima was used, but it could also be something similar in the next IP. The assistants must also learn some of the tasks themselves. One skill that the assistants need to acknowledge from the very beginning is writing formal emails. It is not possible to learn it by writing one good email, but the skill improves by the time. The researchers noticed that it is good if the coordinator lets the assistants write important emails and checks the emails before those are sent. When the coordinator corrects the emails and sends them back to the assistants, they learn by doing.

There are many different tasks included in the project work. Many of them are suitable for the assistants, and if there is more than one assistant, it is good to share the tasks in the very beginning. The tasks that assistants need to do are bookkeeping, marketing of the project, webpages, communication in the consortium and with the external partners and travel management. Biggest responsibility areas are bookkeeping, webpages and marketing. All the other tasks are often done by all assistants. It is important that the responsibilities are clear for all and that they take care of their own tasks. It was although noted, that when having multiple assistants, they can help each other in case of any difficulties in their own areas that they were responsible for. Also, the assistants were able to support and motivate each other. It was discovered that it is a good practicality to have other assistants check the work one has finished. That way the risk of having errors or mistakes in it is minimized. It also affects the quality of the outcome positively.

Internal and external communication, and also communication within the consortium are all part of the coordinator's and possible assistants' responsibilities. Internal communication includes the communication between the organizers. By organizers the researchers mean the coordinator and the assistants. It is really important that the internal communication works, so the event can turn out as successful as possible. The researchers observed that, the most important thing is that everyone involved is kept informed. Especially if there is more than one assistant, it is important to update the same information for everyone. Everything the assistants do should go through the coordinator, so that she/he can see, if the tasks are done on time, and what still needs to be done. That is why internal communication is really intensive and the coordinator and assistants work is synchronized. During the observation process, email turned out to be the most efficient way to go through the work of the assistants. Also, Skype was used to solve urgent matters. The researchers discovered that having a weekly meeting between the coordinator and the assistants was helpful in order to check on the tasks and their deadlines. Memos were also made from the meetings to help the assistants to remember what was agreed and what still needs to be done.

The communication in the consortium is also an important part of the assistants' responsibilities. Besides the partner universities, the consortium covers also the students. The researchers recommend that the assistants would take care of all the informing that needs to be done concerning the consortium. This was discovered to be well working custom in the intensive programme. One of the most important tasks linked to communication in the consortium is meeting arrangements. During the observation process the researchers noted that it is a good idea to let the assistants take care of arranging the meetings. The biggest meetings during the project cycle are the meeting and evaluation meetings. In the best case scenario, the meetings are organized so that all the teachers can meet at one place face to face. That is why planning and arranging these meetings include also travel management. All the other meetings can be kept in any possible web service. The researchers noticed that Adobe Connect Pro was well suitable for that purpose. Before all meetings, it is important to agree a date and time that suits everyone the best. It is also good to write an agenda to be sent to the teachers before the meeting, and after the meeting minutes, which are written based on the agenda.

External communication covers all the communication with the local companies in the venue and also the EU Commission's national agency. The communication with the local companies that are related to the students' projects covers informing and arranging meetings with the companies in advance. The researchers observed that the most challenging part of the process is finding the companies. It is quite challenging to contact the local companies, especially when the Intensive Programme is arranged in another country than it is planned. During the observation the researchers noted that best way to get in contact with the companies is to call the companies directly, because not many of them bother to read email. However, the communication needs to be correct and formal.

When searching for case companies, the content of the study programme in question should be considered. In IC-SID2013, the main focus point was service design, so the assistants thrived to find companies that worked in the service sector. It was noted that a good way to find local companies besides using traditional search engines, was to look for local business associations, and advert the intensive programme through them. Also, the location of the companies should be well considered: they should not be very far from the teaching facilities. When contacting the case companies, an introduction of the coordinating university and the study programme is needed. An official letter including all necessary information about the intensive programme and its content can also be sent via email to the possible case company. The fact that the cooperation during the intensive programme is cost-free and that the companies have a chance to gain new ideas on how to improve their business, should be emphasized. When having received confirmation of attendance from the wanted amount of companies, a thank you- letter should be sent. Also, it is a good custom to remind the companies about the upcoming intensive programme at least twice: A few months before just to verify that they are still willing to work with the students, and a few weeks before the beginning of the intensive programme to agree on the exact schedule and meetings.

One large responsibility area during IC-SID was marketing. The researchers noted many ways of how trying to attract students to take part in the intensive programme. Since the target group is young and use social media frequently, a Facebook- and a Twitter- account was created to attract the attention of the students. Also, it was noted that having social media involved in the process, worked as an informative channel to the students as well. During the research process, it was found as a good idea to create posters, postcards and Powerpoint shows that were sent to all of the participating universities to attract their students' attention. The assistants also held presentations during different study units in Laurea with the permission of the particular unit's teacher, to attract more applicants for the IP. It was discovered useful also for the students, since they then had a chance to ask more questions about the IP. One useful way of attracting the students' attention is to hold small events in a visible area of the school area. It is also a great chance to tell the students about the IP in person and give them a chance to ask questions and give comments. It was noted, that during these events, that took place three times before the application period begun, it was good to have something to make the students notice it. The assistants held a competition related to the country where the IP was held, and it could be seen that it was appealing to the target audience.

### 5.2 Theme interview

Theme interview was chosen to support and deepen the information gained from observing the process of an international Intensive Programme. Theme interview as a research method was familiar for both of the researchers beforehand, so it was known to have many good assets. There were also many potential interview objects that could be helpful in order to gain reliable information with the help of using the method mentioned above. Due to the fact that theme interview is a flexible method that holds the opportunity to be in an eye-to-eye contact with the object, (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 34), the researchers found it as an essential method for the research.

The challenges for using theme interview were studied, and some major focus points were chosen in order to make the interviews successful. To be able to regulate and guide the interviewee, attention to the roles and work division had to be paid. The possibility that there would be unreliable sources that the object might refer to, it needed to be taken into consideration. Time management was also one of the things that had to be focused on, since the planning and execution of an interview is time consuming. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 34-35.)

When using theme interview as a research method, the subject matters are determined beforehand. Unlike in a structured interview, theme interview has no specific pre-ordered structure or order. The interviewer has to make sure that all of the matters will get discussed during the interview, and holds a list of the areas that need to be discussed about. Thus, the interviewer has no pre-defined questions for the interview. (Eskola and Suoranta 2005, 86.)

When planning interviews, the need of planning will highlight when the process of the research proceeds. Pre-planning before the research process is still essential, since it helps to determine the main focus points and solutions for the research. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 66-67.) Also, the way that the analyzing part will be executed, needs to be considered already in the planning phase. If the analyzing has been considered beforehand, it can be used as one of the guidelines when executing and littering the interview. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 135.) The time used for planning is not usually wasted, and the more carefully the planning is made, the easier it is to analyze the results afterwards. When planning a theme interview, the researcher needs to decide what kind of results they want focus on. Also, forming hypothesis is part of the planning process. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 65-66.)

One of the most important things that need to be taken into consideration in a theme interview is to plan the themes for the interview. It needs to be thoroughly considered whether all the phenomenas related to the research have to be mentioned in the interview situation. When creating the basis for a theme interview, a list of the themes that need to be discussed about, has to be prepared. The list should be based on the theoretical base, that supports the entire research. Themes are the areas that hold the interview questions, but no particular list of the questions asked is made.  In the interview situation, the theme list acts as a guideline for the interviewer and helps to keep the discussion within the themes. During the interview the list is specified with the help of questions. It is part of the theme interviews nature that both the researcher and interviewee are able to clarify the themes. The themes chosen should leave room for the true versatility related to the subject that is being researched. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 66-67.)

Before executing a theme interview, decisions on time, place, duration and equipment have to be made. When deciding the time of the interview, some basic facts need to be noted. The day of the week and the actual time need to be decided. It is recommended that the interview should take place between Monday to Friday, not earlier than 08:00 hours and not later than 20:00 hours. The location of the interview can vary depending on the resources, the research problems and the wishes and/or restrictions of the interviewee. When having a theme interview, the location should be safe and comfortable for the interviewee in order to receive as much information as possible. The best place for interviews is a place where communication between the participants is as effortless and non-distracted as possible. The duration of theme interviews is hard to determine beforehand, since it is mainly dependent on the interviewee's eagerness and knowledge on the themes. Two hours is a good maximum guide limit for a theme interview; any longer than that may cause loosing focus. The researcher has to determine the right equipment for the interview. It is necessary to record the interview for further littering and analysis. The recording device used depends on the resources of the interviewer. Also, the way the interview will be saved needs to considered, since it is essential that results can be listened afterwards (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 65- 70.)

There are some specific characteristics that can be defined when it comes to qualitative analyzing. Qualitative analysis is usually close to the context, and the data collected can be stored in a vocal form. When the researcher is executing the interviews, they can already start analyzing some data. Notices during the interview situation can be made based on for example the frequency of some issues appeared in the interview. When analyzing a qualitative data, the reasoning can be either inductive, when the researcher focuses on the material collected, or abductive, when there are some theoretical main assumptions that are thrived to be verified with the help of the data collected from the research. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 136.)

When using theme interview as a method of collecting data, a large amount of information is normally collected. Commonly, all of the material gained from the interviews is not essential to be analyzed, and not all of the data collected can be taken advantage of. It is important that the analyzing phase begins as quickly after the interview as possible, since it has many advantages: The data is still fresh and insipires the researcher, and if it turns out that there are still some things to be figured out or more information is needed, it is easiest to execute immediately after the interviews. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2006, 135-136.)

When using interview as a way to collect information, usually a large amount of material is resulted. The material can be approached in many different ways, and it can be difficult to start the analyzing of the material. That is why it is a good practice to start making tentative analysis simultaneously when collecting data. In a qualitative research, both collecting and analyzing the data go hand in hand. (Ruusuvuori et al. 2010, 11.)

There are three main stages that can be recognized in any qualitative interview analysis. Those are classifying, analyzing and interpreting the collected information. The importance of these three stages can differ depending on the research style, equipment and the target. When classifying the data, it is important to acknowledge the way different areas can be linked together and interpreted when the analysis proceeds. Also, the way that the reliability and validity of the analysis results can be proved, needs to be taken into consideration. (Ruusuvuori et al. 2010, 11-23.)

According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2006, 15), There are three ways that the analysis of a qualitative interview can be executed. The first one of them is to litter the data and proceed straight to the analyzing phase, relying on the intuition of the researcher. The second way is to first dissolve and then code the collected data, and after that start making the analysis. Thirdly, the dissolving and coding can be combined before starting to analyze the information.

### 5.2.1 Implementation of the theme interviews

In this thesis it was decided that theme interviews would be held with two people with different viewpoints on organizing and managing an Intensive Programme. Outi Jäppinen, a representative from CIMO, was interviewed to receive information about financial and administrative issues regarding Erasmus Intensive Programmes. Mrs. Jäppinen also provided information on behalf of European Union on how to stick to the guidelines provided by it. Ms. Britta Thege from Kiel University of Applied Sciences, who is the project coordinator of the next Erasmus Intensive Programme, was interviewed in order to have the information on what kind of expectations the next Intensive Programme coordinator holds and what kind of information will be needed for the Intensive Programme to be successful.

In this research, the authors planned their theme interviews individually depending on the person interviewed. The main objectives and hypothesis were made considering the interviewee, and what kind of information was needed from them. The interview plans are also attached to this thesis (attachment 3&4).

When deciding who to interview, the researchers took the targets that could provide the most qualitative and reliable information into consideration. In order to receive as much helpful information as possible, it was decided that someone from the Centre for International Mobility in Finland, CIMO, needed to be interviewed. The researchers ended up contacting Mrs. Outi Jäppinen, who is the Senior Programme Advisor in CIMO. It was considered that Mrs. Jäppinen held the most amount of information considering organizing Erasmus Intensive Programmes. She was considered as the person who had experience and expertise that would be useful for the research. The interview took place May 14th 2013 in Hakaniemi, Helsinki, where the office for CIMO is located. The interview started on time and was recorded with a tape recorder.

The other theme interview was held for Mrs. Britta Thege, who, as mentioned earlier, will be the next organizer of an Erasmus Intensive Programme. It was essential for the research to find out what kind of hopes and expectation Mrs. Thege would have towards the Intensive Programme. Also, in order to provide her with a guidebook that could meet her needs the best way possible, the researchers needed to find what kind skills and knowledge she already had and what kind of information she would need in order to organize the Intensive Programme successfully. Due to the fact that Mrs. Thege is a professor in Kiel University of Applied Sciences located in Germany, the interview was held via Adobe connect pro, which is a virtual meeting space where the participants can discuss through microphones. Via Adobe connect pro, it is also possible to share pictures and documents, and use a live-chat. The interview was held on Tuesday April 30th 2013. The researchers and Mrs. Thege used headphones and a microphone during the entire interview, and it was recorded using the recorder linked in Adobe connect pro.

### 5.2.2 Results of the theme interviews

In this chapter, the results from both of the two interviews are presented. First, the outcomes of the interview with Mrs. Outi Jäppinen from CIMO are stated, and after that the outcomes of the interview with Ms. Britta Thege are presented. These results give useful information that can be exploited into the guidebook.

The interview with Mrs. Outi Jäppinen gave the researchers a great amount of useful information about what needs to be taken into consideration when it comes to the EU regulations and the national agency, CIMO's orders. The information gained from the interview supports the results of the observation process.

Mrs. Jäppinen stated in the interview that there are a lot of EU regulations that need to be taken into consideration when organizing Erasmus- intensive programmes. All coordinators need to familiarize themselves with the regulations before organizing a programme. The most important information can be found from the coordinator's handbook. This handbook can be found from CIMO's websites (CIMO 2013). However, the most helpful document for the coordinator is the application form. The focus points of the Erasmus programme and the objectives of the intensive programmes can be found from it. The regulations come from the Life Long Learning Programme document that has been created in the year 2007. The application is the simplest document for the coordinator, but there are also references to some EU documents in the application. If all the questions found in the application are answered, then the project management is in a good phase.

The possible changes in regulations after year 2013 were also talked about with Mrs. Jäppinen. It is important for the coordinator to know if there will be any changes for the regulations coming up. However, any big changes are not made recently. The forms are modified after every year slightly, because the user-friendliness is taken into consideration. There may be parts that cause questions among the coordinators, and these parts are specified for next year. The national agencies hear out the coordinators and discuss together about what changes will be suggested to the European Commission.

The funding of the Intensive Programmes is clear and it is introduced in the coordinator's guidebook. The coordinator must get to know the funding regulations. The three expense classes in the intensive programme funding are travel costs, accommodation and subsistence costs and organizational costs. In the interview with Mrs. Jäppinen, some useful observations came out. First, the organizational costs can be anything from arranging meetings to offering dinners or excursions. The national agency does not need to see the receipts from these expenses, but everything must be right in the university's bookkeeping and everything must obey the law. The only thing that the national agency needs to be aware of is that the Intensive Programme has fulfilled the implementation requirements. In the accommodation cost class, the tariffs for students are really small. The country based tariff list can be found from the coordinator's handbook. That is why coordinators have come up with different solutions for organizing food and accommodation for students. For example, it is a good idea not to stay in a hotel, but to accommodate the students somewhere together like in a cottage. Also, cooking food together in the accommodation facilities lowers the costs.

In a force majeure situation the coordinator must know what to do. One important thing is to know who pays the costs. Mrs. Jäppinen points out that in this kind of a compulsive situation CIMO does usually refund the extra costs. However, every case is looked at separately. An example of a force majeure situation would be a case where the Intensive Programme is organized with the minimum requirement of ten students. If such a thing happened that one of the students would get sick just before the Intensive Programme starts and was unable to participate, CIMO would let the coordinator to organize the programme. However, it is important that the coordinator has a waiting list, just in case someone is not able to participate after all.

Mrs. Jäppinen also noted that there are different ways to handle the money that is meant for students. The coordinator can decide on their own which way is the best, since Mrs. Jäppinen could not tell which is the best way to do it. Some coordinators choose to give part of the money directly to the students. In this case the coordinator only arranges the accommodation and lets the students themselves decide what to eat with the money they have got. The most popular way is to arrange everything ready for the students, because that way the expenditure is more controlled. It is also possible to give the money straight to the partners, and to let them arrange everything for their students.

Besides application, also the reporting part must be remembered. Mrs. Jäppinen says that the applications are often much better than the reports. However, it is important that the reports are also well done because it tells how the Intensive Programme has succeeded. The best reports are the ones that tell honestly how everything went. If something has gone badly during the IP, it is good to mention it in the report and write also how it could have been prevented. The idea is not to be perfect, but to reflect what has been learned. It also came up in the interview, that IC-SID reports have been exclusive and really good. The researchers have seen previous IC-SID reports and also been collecting the data for this year's report, so they have knowledge on what kind of a report is good. Reports are not converted back if some information is missing, but those do affect to the extensions for the Intensive Programmes. When a coordinator applies extension years for a specific Intensive Programme, the report from the previous year is also read in the application process. The assessors give feedback also from the report, and this should be taken into consideration in the future.  If it is not noted even in the next year's application, the funding might not be granted.

According to the interview with Mrs. Jäppinen, it is good to have meetings among the participating universities of the Intensive Programme face to face, in addition to online meetings. Usually there is a kick off –meeting and an evaluation meeting, which are organized in a centered place for all participants. These meetings are covered from organizational costs. The minutes from the meetings should be put in the final report. It is important for the national agency to see those documents.

In the interview with Mrs. Jäppinen, it came out that dissemination activities are often not noticed enough, because there is no funding targeted to dissemination activities. The coordinators must reserve money from organizational costs, or the coordinating university has to pay the costs. For that reason, dissemination activities are not in a focus point in most Intensive Programmes. One reason is also the fact that when the programme is finalized, the coordinator might feel that everything is done and does not have so much energy anymore to control the dissemination activities. However, it would be great if new teaching methods would be spread out to a wider range than just to the partner network universities. It is also positive if there is an external partner taken in to the dissemination activities.

The other interview executed with Ms. Britta Thege gave important information on what a new coordinator expects from organizing an Erasmus- intensive programme. This interview gave the researchers valuable clues on what kind of information should be put into the guidebook. Ms. Thege has experience in organizing scientific conferences in the Kiel UAS.

In the interview Ms. Thege brought up qualities she thinks an Intensive Programme coordinator should have. She felt that an open-minded attitude is the most important thing in the beginning. Also, tremendous organization skills are needed. Other skills that Ms. Thege found important are good English skills, conflict management skills, patience and kindness. All of these are important qualities and are linked to some parts of organizing the Intensive Programme .

Ms. Thege felt that the organization of IC-SID2013 worked really well. According to Ms. Thege, the most important thing is to react to people's requests immediately. She thought that that was well covered in IC-SID2013. She also thinks that the communication in IC-SID2013 was functional.

### 5.3 Feedback forms

IC-SID2013 used two kinds of feedback forms to gather information from the participants. One form was designed for the use of the partner network, and the other to meet guidelines of the EU. In this chapter first the basic theory of feedback forms is explained. After that the use of feedback forms in this thesis process is introduced. In the end the results of the feedback forms are analyzed.

The way the feedback form is designed, depends on the purpose and the target group. Also, the way the answering process is monitored, can vary depending on these factors. The situation can be monitored by the researchers, but at times the feedback form can also be sent via email or post. When planning the questions for a feedback form, the fact that the questions create a base for the research, must be taken into consideration. It must be recognized that the person answering filling the feedback form might not answer in a way that researchers has thought the questions to be answered. This creates most of the errors in the results. That is why the questions need to as simple as possible, and they should not leave room for the answerer to get misguided. (Aaltola and Valli 2010, 103-104.)

One of the focus points when gathering data with feedback forms was to pay attention to the way the questions were formed, in order to get reliable results. Since the feedback forms were filled under surveillance, the possibility for the people filling in the forms to ask in case of misunderstanding was also a point that needed to focused on. In this kind of situation the answering percentage is usually high, so it was essential to be able to supervise the filling of the forms. (Aaltola and Valli 2010, 108-109.)

### 5.3.1 Implementation of the feedback forms

The main reason that feedback forms were used was that in that way it was possible to gather information from a larger group of people attending to an Intensive Programme. During IC-SID2013, the researchers were due to plan and execute two different feedback forms to collect and analyze data from the participants. The information gathered from these forms were useful in this research as well, since it gave a lot of information on what was organized well, and on what things the organizers should pay more attention to. Also, wanting the quality of the data gathered to be the best quality as possible, the feedback forms were held as a positive addition to the methods mentioned above.

The feedback forms were used as background material in this thesis. They were designed to be used for the advantage of IC-SID2013, and to support the analyzing of the previous Intensive Programmes. They were not created for the research of this thesis, but they provided qualitative and reliable information that could be used for the benefit of this particular research. Since IC-SID2013 is similar to PHATSID2014, and the planning and executing of those two Intensive Programmes are alike, the feedback forms and the results from them could be taken advantage of.

The feedback forms were handed both to the students and teachers of IC-SID2013, in the last day of their stay in IC-SID2013, Leicester, England. The answering process was monitored, so that everyone participating in the IP answered to the questionnaire. The forms were designed separately for the teachers and the students. They were created on the basis of the Intensive Programme coordinators' needs and the guidelines for the final report delivered by the national agency in Finland, CIMO. They focused on finding out the level of contentment on different aspects of the Intensive Programme, such as housing, quality of teaching and learning environment. The results of the feedback forms were then gathered and composed by the assistants of IC-SID2013. The results were analyzed in the form of graphical images that also show the percentage of the level of contentment.

### 5.3.2 Results of the feedback forms

When handling the feedback forms and SWOT analysis that were gathered during IC-SID2013, it was noticed that the results supported the outcomes of the observation process. The feedback was used to gain more detailed information on how the IP was organized. The results also gave the researchers information about the parts that were done well, and the areas that might need some improvements.

When studying the results of the feedback forms made to the students of IC-SID2013, it could be detected that the overall level of contentment towards the IP was excellent. The participants agreed that the food, travel and housing arrangements were done well. It also came out that the level of contentment towards the work of the assistants was good. The students were happy about the quality of the teaching during the IP, and they agreed that all practicalities were executed well. The general atmosphere amongst all the participants was described as very good, according to the feedback gathered.

The SWOT analysis that was made on the basis of the discussions that were held during the last day of IC-SID2013, reinforced the results gained form the feedback forms. It was noticed, that all the students enjoyed their stay in Leicester, England, and they felt that they gained a great experience when working in an international environment. The SWOT analysis also revealed, that all the students felt that they were accepted as a part of the group, and no one was left out. From the SWOT analysis, it could be seen that everyone participating in the IP was content on the high quality of the Intensive Programme. They also agreed that participating in it provided them with knowledge and skills that they could find useful in the future.

The results gathered from the feedback forms and the SWOT analysis that were initially made for the final EU report and for the future use of the IC-SID2013- project coordinator, provided the research process with complementary information. They supported the discoveries the researchers had made during their observation process. The results from the feedback forms and the SWOT analysis helped to verify the objectiveness of the observation results. They also served as complementary information to the research. Both the feedback form results and the SWOT analysis proved that the Intensive Programme was planned and carried out in a way that everyone participating was content. With that information, it can be said that the process of coordinating IC-SID2013 works as a good example to follow when a new Intensive Programme coordinator starts their own IP.

# 6 The Guidebook

As a result of this process, a guidebook for the new Erasmus Intensive Programme coordinator was created. The guidebook holds all essential information on how to organize the particular event. The information in it is based on the results that are received during the research process. Due to a request by the commissioner of this thesis, the guidebook will not be published in this thesis.

The core of the guidebook is a timeline, which starts from when the application for the Intensive Programme is accepted by the national agency of the organizing university. The timeline ends to the point when the report of the Intensive Programme is accepted and the final money is returned. The timeline proceeds in a chronological order, and has suggested checkpoints to help the organizer to keep up to date. It holds the information on what actions need to be taken at which time. The actions include budgeting, marketing and recruiting. Also, the stage where the event planning should be and good practicalities during different checkpoints are introduced in the guidebook.

The guidebook for the new Intensive Programme coordinator will not concentrate on communication between the participants and the organizing university. It was agreed that another thesis produced by Marika Pakkanen involved around the same Intensive Programme and mandated by the same partner network, will hold the information on how the communication during the Intensive Programme should be taken care of.  Even though a communication plan for the Intensive Programme will be created by another research process, some suggestions and good practicalities on how to handle communication in an international environment are mentioned in order for the organizer to receive all crucial information for the IP to gain success.

# 7 Conclusions

In this chapter, the conclusions of this thesis are compiled. The results are examined and the true value of them is evaluated. The results are compared with the original goals set for this thesis to present if the objectives are met. Also, the information gathered from the previous research by CIMO, are considered together with the research results of the methods used in this process, to present any similarities and differences between them. First, the purpose and goals of the thesis are presented.

This research was executed as a functional thesis. The mission was to research good practical ways of organizing an Erasmus Intensive Programme.  The main focus point was in event and project management. Since the intensive programme’s operational environment had multiple European nationalities represented, the practicalities of event and project management were considered from an international viewpoint. As a result of the research process, a guidebook for the next Erasmus intensive programme coordinator was created. As it was hoped, the guidebook holds information on how to organize the IP in the most efficient way. It holds suggestions and good practical knowledge in order for the intensive programme to be as successful as possible.

The goal for the thesis was to provide enough information for the coordinator to be able to carry out the intensive programme from the very beginning to the end without him/her having previous experience in acting as a coordinator. It is desirable that the guidebook will be exploited in other similar projects. Unfortunately during this thesis process it came out that the planned Erasmus intensive programme PHATSID2014 had not got the funding from DAAD. Even though the guidebook cannot be used in this particular intensive programme, it can be used in many similar projects.

Some differences can be brought up between the observation and CIMO's researches. These differences result from the fact that there are a lot of ways to organize Erasmus Intensive Programmes, and the writers of this thesis observed just one possible way. However, in the observation process it was clear that the observed way of organizing an Intensive Programme is functional.

Differences can be found especially in organizing money related issues. For example, the writers of this thesis observed that organizing everything ready for the students is a good way to handle money issues. However, Mrs. Jäppinen, the representative from CIMO together with some of the coordinators who had participated in the CIMO'c discussions, had given money straight to the students and allowed them to handle food or accommodation on their own. It is possible to use either way when organizing an intensive programme, though the observers noticed that when everything is organized ready for the students, it is much easier to deal with the receipts and bookkeeping. This is why the observed way of organizing money was suggested.

According to the statement of the commissioner, the guidebook meets the goals that were set. The commissionerr comments that the guidebook is suitable for IPs and other similar projects. The differences between IPs are brought up in the comments and how every project is coordinated differently. However this is also taken into account in the thesis by emphasizing that the guidelines are only suggestions and the coordinator should choose the best options for the specific project.

The writers of this thesis have collected suggestions of the best ways to organize an Intensive Programme considering the results of observation, interviews, feedbacks and CIMO's previous researches. The goals of this thesis were well met. Enough reliable information was gathered in order for the next Erasmus Intensive Programme coordinator to create a successful IP. The information gathered during the process is presented in the guidebook, which can be held as a job description for the next coordinator. This process produced enough information to cover all the essential needs of a first-time Erasmus Intensive Programme coordinator.

# References

## Literature

Aaltola, J. & Valli, R.2010. Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin 1. 3rd edition. Juva: WS Bookwell.

Bargiela-Chiappini, F. & Kádár, D. 2011. Politeness Across Cultures. Hampshire: Palgrave McMillan.

Bloor, M. & Wood, F. 2006. Keywords in Qualitative Methods. A vocabulary of research concepts. London: Sage publications.

Clements, J. & Gido, J. 2006. Effective Project Management. Mason: Thomson South-Western.

Eriksson, P. & Kovalainen, A. Qualitative Methods in Business Research. 2008. London: Sage publications.

Eskola, J. & Suoranta, J. 2005. 7th edition. Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen. Jyväskylä: Gummerus kirjapaino Oy.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. 2006. The Discovery of Grounded Theory.: strategies for qualitative research. New Jersey: Aldine Transaction.

Guirdham, M. 1999. Communicating Across Cultures. London: Macmillan press.

Grbich, C. 2011. Qualitative Data Analysis an Introduction. London: Sage publications.

Heagney, J. 2012. Fundamentals of Project Management. 4th edition. New York: American Management Association.

Hirsjärvi, S. & Hurme, H.2006. Tutkimushaastattelu. Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö. 4th edition. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino Kustannus.

Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P., & Sajavaara, P. 2009. Tutki ja kirjoita. 15th edition. Helsinki: Tammi.

Jandt, F. 2010. An Introduction to International Communication. Identities in a Global Community. 6th edition. California: Sage publications.

Karlsson, Å. & Marttala, A. 2001. Projektikirja – Onnistuneen projektin toteuttaminen. Helsinki: Kauppakaari.

Lawson, K. 2009. Successful Coaching & Mentoring. London: New Holland Publishers.

Liu, S., Volcic, Z. & Gallois, C. 2011. Introducing International Communication Global Cultures and Contexts. London: Sage publications.

Parppei, R. 2008. Business coaching itsesäätelyn kehitysinterventiona. Espoo: Helsinki University of technology.

Parry, B., Shone, A. 2010. Successfull Event Management. 3rd edition. Hampshire: Congage Learning.

Ragins, B. & Kram, K. 2007. The Handbook of Mentoring at Work. London: Sage Publications.

Raj, R., Walters, P. & Rashid, T. Events Management. An Integrated and Practical Approach. 2009. London: Sage publications.

Ruuska, K. 2012. Pidä projekti hallinnassa. 7th edition. Helsinki: Talentum.

Ruusuvuori, J. Nikander, P. Hyvärinen, M. 2010. Haastattelun analyysi. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Silvers, J. 2012. Professional Event Coordination. 2nd edition. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Silverthorne, C. 2005. Organizational Psychology in Cross-Cultural Perspective. New York: New York University Press.

Trompenaars, F. & Woolliams, P. 2004. Business Across Cultures. Chichester: Capstone Publishing Ltd.

Vallo, H. & Häyrinen, E. 2012. Tapahtuma on tilaisuus. 3rd edition. Helsinki: Tietosanoma.

Young, T. 2006. Successful Project Management. 2nd edition. London: Kogan Page.

Webpages

CIMO 2013.CIMO. Accessed 26 February 2013. http://cimo.fi

European Union 2013. Accessed 26 February 2013. http://europa.eu/

Event Management Guide. Seinäjoki science park. Accessed 1 July 2013. http://www.eventmanagementguide.frami.fi

Kulttuuri käsitteenä. Moped. Accessed 2 July 2013. http://www.moped.fi/kulttuurit/kasite.html

Miten tapahtuma arvioidaan? Kehitysvammaisten tukiliitto. Accessed 21 August 2013. http://www.kvtl.fi/fi/opas-perhetapahtuman-jarjestajalle/nain-tapahtuma-onnistuu/tapahtuman-arviointi-ja-palaute/

Mitä on kulttuuri? Internetix. Accessed 2 July 2013. http://materiaalit.internetix.fi/fi/opintojaksot/9historia/euroopankulttuurihistoria/mita_on_kulttuuri

Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method 2005. Forum: Qualitative social research. Accessed 1 July 2013. http://www.qualitative-research.net

Riskien hallinta. Webforum. Accessed 16 July 2013. http://webforum.com/web/page.aspx?refid=1753&gclid=CInLoqazs7gCFS92cAod1l0ABA

Riskien hallinta projektissa 2013. Wakaru Oy. Accessed 16 July 2013. https://www.wakaru.fi/etusivu/lue-lisaa/prince2/riskienhallinta-projektissa

What is Business Coaching? 2013.Action COACH. Accessed 21 August 2013. http://www.actioncoach.com/what-is-business-coaching

Pictures

Appendices

Appendix 1 Mentoring meeting minutes

**IC-SID2013** **Minutes** 2/2013

15.1.2013

**Project meeting**

Time Tuesday 15.1.2013, 09:00

Place Beat Corner 2, Laurea Leppävaara

Matters discussed

1. Case Companies
   - Two more case companies needed
   - Call to Cow&Plough, David Orton and The Federation of Small Businesses
   - Mr.King's business is an option as well
2. Marketing
   - Marketing to other study programmes, especially business economics
   - Marketing to adult students as well; find out if they have classes at the end of the week
   - More face-to-face marketing; print & share more postcards!
3. Evaluation meeting
   - Week 21 from Mon-Fri
   - Do research on affordable flights and accommodation options for all the participants
   - Remember: put an effort to the minutes!
4. Thesis
   - Can be assumed that the organizer is Germany
   - What to consider: roles, schedule, EU guidelines, housing for teachers and students, food for students
   - Commissioner: IC-SID partner network, represented by Kristina Henriksson
5. Other issues
   - Send e-mail: How is the new application proceeding?
   - Remember to unify the laptops
   - Flight suggestions for students
   - Find out if the IT-college is open
   - Make a chart of arrivals & departures to/from England
   - Make a map with all the airports & all of the participants' arrivals place & time

Emilia Grön
Project assistant

Appendix 2 Marketing poster

Appendix 3 Interview plan for Mrs. Outi Jäppinen

Interview plan, Outi Jäppinen from CIMO Finland

| Themes | Supporting questions |
|---|---|
| 1.Regulations of the European Union guidelines? | - What are the most important<br>- What changes have been made to the regulations compared to previous years? |
| 2.The financial part of an intensive programme | - What are the issues that are most often forgotten?<br>- If a participant gets ill during the IP, what happens to their financial part?<br>- Force majeur- situations: How the extra expenses are dealt with? For example if an ash cloud appears. |
| 3.The most common issues that need to be improved | - What kind of issues have come up from the feedback? |
| 4.Reporting | - What is wished to have more in the report?<br>- What kind of documents from meetings there reports normally include, and how often meetings are usually held?<br>- What are the most common lacks in the reports? |
| 5.Different ways to coordinate intensive programmes | |
| 6.What are expected from the partners? | - What EU expects from the participating universities and students?<br>- How can they be proceeded? |
| 7.Expectations for the quality of teaching fulfilled? | - What kind of qualities need to be<br>- What the teaching material is expected to be like? |
| 8.Dissemination activities | - How are dissemination activities supported on behalf of the EU?<br>- Is there a substance that informs about dissemination activities? |

| | |
|---|---|
| 9.Travel costs | - How flexible is the EU when it comes travel costs?<br>- Some are forced to return part of the finance, how will it influence the financing in the future? |
| 10.Advice for a new intensive programme organizer | |

Appendix 4 Interview plan for Ms. Britta Thege

Interview plan, Professor Britta Thege, University of Applied Sciences in Kiel

| Themes | Supporting questions |
| --- | --- |
| Expectations of the IP | - What are your expectations to wards the IP?<br>- What kind of information do you need in order for the IP to gain success? |
| Possible outcomes of the IP | - What are the main outcomes you wish the IP will have?<br>- What kind of cooperation do you wish to outcome from the IP? |
| Goals | - Can you name three main goals for the IP?<br>- Do you have any specific goal that you wish to focus on? |
| Qualities of project assistants | - What kind of qualities do you wish the project assistants to have?<br>- Do you expect any particular skills from them? |
| Communication | - How did the communication work during IC-SID?<br>- What do you think could be improved in the next project?<br>- How did the different communication channels work; email, skype etc.? |
| Improvements for the new IP | - What could be done better in 2014?<br>- What are the things that didn't work so well in IC-SID? |
| Expectations towards the guidebook | |