

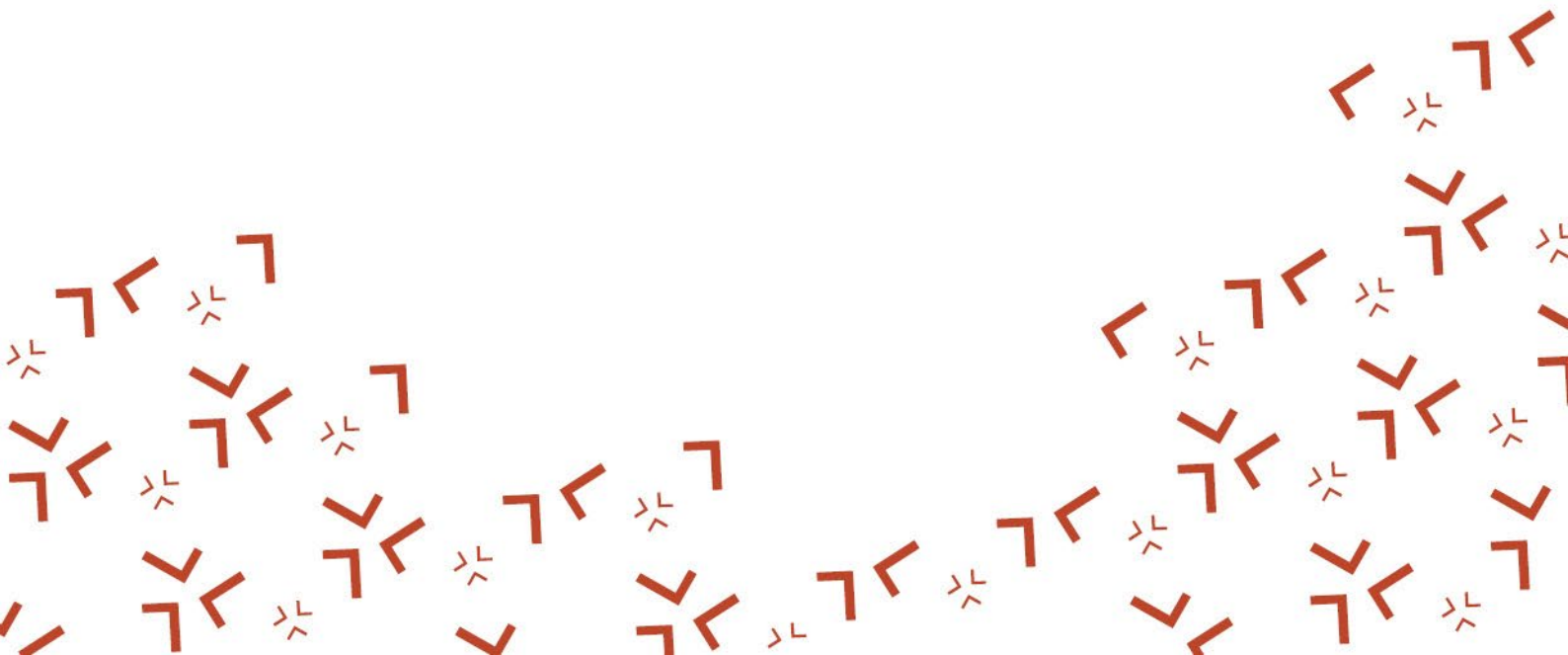
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International Project Management learning with international partners

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Strategic partnership development has been a deliberate choice at Lapland UAS incorporated in key activities of entire education development at our school. Strategic partnership does not just happen, it can be advanced and strengthened through practical collaborative joint actions.

An example is Erasmus+ intensive blended study program IBSP “International Project Management and Funding Instruments” (10 ECTS) jointly created and implemented during 2021-2022 by Lapland UAS, Finland, Fontys UAS, the Netherlands, FH Aachen UAS, Germany. Actual implementation of the intensive course started in late January, 2022 and is finalized in mid-April 2022. Six intensive weeks students from partner universities were participating in weekly online lectures and teamwork sessions, learning the theory and applying to an actual project case provided by Dutch company Lightyear that is developing a innovative solar-powered car. The joint efforts in developing and executing this program have proven to be a meaningful, inspiring and enriching experience that benefits all those involved.

All together over 40 participants were involved in the program and eight teachers and staff from all universities. The culmination of the IBSP was a study trip to Finnish Lapland,

Rovaniemi and Inari area from 21.3-25.3.2022. In the following chapters students and teachers are sharing their experiences.

Exchange students of Lapland UAS Eloïse and Aude sharing entire experience of the course and study trip

“International Project Management course gave us the opportunity to work on a project with international students. We were mixed in groups of 4 or 5 with students from other countries. The aim of the project was to support “Lightyear” company in its development and management of staff from different countries. Lightyear is a brand of solar-powered vehicles. To do this we had meetings twice a week, sometimes a few more meetings with just the team members to make further progress on the project. We also had the opportunity to interview the Lightyear management to better understand the actual problem given to us as a challenge that we needed to solve.

Academic experience

First of all, this project allowed us to learn a lot about project management. Indeed, we didn't know other students we were going to work with, and for most of us it was the first time we were working with foreign students, so we had to learn. That's why we had team building courses aiming to strengthen the teamwork, to detect the strengths and weaknesses of each of us in order to use our resources in the best way.

Moreover, most of the students had never been in charge of managing such a project, so we learnt through the course all practical tools to be efficient in the process of the real life project. For example, we learned how to use the Gantt chart, the Work Breakdown Structure, planning and task allocation. We feel, that we are now able to manage a project better thanks to these skills.



Picture: students rejoin on campus after 6 weeks online (picture by A.Krastina)

Intensive study week in Lapland

On Monday 21 March, 2022 we finally had the chance to meet other students after more than two months of seeing each other through our screens. Indeed, the Germans and Dutch came to Rovaniemi. It was a very rich moment; we were all very happy to finally meet each other. We then continued to work on the project face to face, it was completely different, everyone was highly motivated to work together. We then presented all our research and progress on the project orally. We also took advantage of their presence to show the city, to visit Santa Claus Village. In the first evening we had the chance to make a campfire and to see the Northern Lights in Ounasvaara . It was an unforgettable experience to share this kind of moments with people coming from other countries, discovering other cultures.



Picture : meeting with Santa Claus (picture by Santa's elf)

The study trip to Inari

On Wednesday, 23.3.2022 whole group of 40 people, students and teachers went on a study trip to Inari, in the north of Finnish Lapland. We visited the Siida museum, learnt about Sami culture, history and current times. Later on, we visited local restaurant Ahkun Tupa in Lemmenjoki valley where we were offered typical Lappish meal - reindeer soup and blueberry cake, followed by the presentation of the Sami customs. The stories told touched all the students and teachers. Feltmaker artist Kaija Paltto impressed with her handcrafts and the stories about the reindeer herder livelihoods.



Picture: reindeers running during the visit of the reindeer farm (picture par J. Hübel)

The day was concluded at the accommodation in Vasatokka, and then experiencing how to make a real Finnish sauna. The day ended with an incredible evening, all together having laugh, dance and singing joy. It was an unforgettable moment for all of us. In the final day of the trip for the thrill-seekers, it was snowmobiling tour in the morning. We could drive on the frozen lake of Inari and see the numerous islands, as well as drink a hot drink and eat a biscuit followed by photos with the snowmobiles. On the way back to Rovaniemi, we stopped in Levi, a Finnish ski resort located in Lapland, for most of us it was a warm coffee break while discussing the incredible trip we had just lived.



Picture: snowmobile tour on Inari lake (picture by A.Krastina)

For the future students we warmly recommend to choose this course for the skills it will give you of course, but not only that, in fact, it is a concrete project, next year the subject will be different but we are sure it will be as interesting. And above all for the human experience that it brings. We have all bonded strongly with each other, we even plan to meet again, and we wish next year's students the same experience as we had.”

Students from Fontys UAS in the Netherlands and FH Aachen UAS in Germany shared their insights about the course and study trip

“I think the course was really helpful for my project management skills. I got tools and information about how to plan and organize a project. I also learned a lot about working in international teams. Working in an international team has also led to new insights and ideas. By sharing these ideas with the other teams, you can learn even more. I also learned how to work in an international team, what role do I have in a team and how to you make a proper collaboration contract etc. This course also helped me to find and formulate a good problem statement and to be able to properly investigate the problem.”

“The trip to Lapland was fantastic! I was blown away by the hospitality, the nature and the people who joined the trip. The weeks was filled with fruitful discussions, new experiences and laughter's. Even nature rewarded the students for their great project work with the occurrence of northern lights. We learned a lot and gained a whole lot of experiences, may it be intercultural, personal or professional.”

“I would recommend this trip to others because it was a very interesting but also fun experience. You get to know a lot of new people and connect with them on mutual interests. For me this has been a great experience that I hope to do again someday”

“I think this trip gave me a lot of new insights and in my opinion, I have learned more in one week on this trip than in a few weeks in school. I have improved my English and German as well, since I was talking English the whole day, even with the Dutch students. I have learned about project management, about different school and work cultures and international teamwork. And also, the trip itself was for me a once in a lifetime opportunity to go to Finland.”

“This is a one in a life time experience and it will enrich your life forever. Being with “locals” or students that lived there for a couple of months gives the possibility to explore the area in a different way than being a tourist. The nature is so pretty and the Finnish people are super nice so why would anybody not go there.”



Picture: Northern Light at the campfire, Ounasvaara (Picture by J. Hübel)

Techers from partner universities

Nancy Brouwers, teacher at Fontys University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands: “It was a great and powerful project for all of us. We learned so much from this project. It’s an excellent way to develop, grow and learn at an international level! “

Marloes Coenen, teacher at Fontys University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands: “It was such a wonderful sight to see all these students from different cultures working together, laughing, eating, having fun and learning. Like they had known each other for years.”

Frank Postelmans, Lecturer at Fontys University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands: “We have done a project in a collaboration between 3 universities: Lapin AMK (Finland), Aachen (Germany) and Fontys (the Netherlands). 31 students from 10 different countries and nationalities participated in this project. The groups were together for five days and they were working on an academic assignment: they gave an advice to a company about how to keep the corporate culture while the company is growing more than double in a year and starting a close collaboration with a Finnish company. Six student teams gave the company advice from several perspectives. Every team acted well and one was excellent. Besides the assignment they learnt a lot of working together in a multicultural team and learnt about the culture of Lapland. The

group shared a lot of impressive experiences and became close to each other and of course they had a lot of fun”

Marie Kloss, International Coordinator & Academic Counsellor, FH Aachen UAS, Germany
“Through the project, we were able to get to know and test out the different teaching methods of the countries involved. The exchange with students and teachers from three different countries was great to understand the different mentalities and characteristics when working in international teams.”

Nick Heijder, Lecturer at Fontys University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands: “Erasmus enables students and lecturers alike, to build bridges across countries, work together on important issues and share knowledge and experiences. An educational adventure like this leads to meaningful memories that will stay in participants hearts and minds forever.”

In conclusion, everyone can say that entire learning journey was an extraordinary experience, which can not be measured by only tangible outcomes, such as credits and new competencies. After the times of Covid-19 lockdowns and distance or digital learning, meeting in person each other we could not hold the amount of positive energies that were in the room when entire group came together. In addition, learning by travelling brought us a new project idea of a nomad leadership university to be jointly built in the future!

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Lapland UAS www.lapinamk.fi/en

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