



European Diploma in Intercultural Competence

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

The project “EDICC” aimed at developing an academic curriculum for Continuing Education on Intercultural Competence. Demand for intercultural competence in Europe is growing. Labour mobility, cooperation between countries and competitiveness of European businesses increase the need for culture sensitive working practices. In a culturally complex setting, it is necessary to be able to choose the right kind of working and communication strategies. Sensitivity to cultural differences may be natural for some people, but necessary for all.

This project modified and transferred existing theoretical, multidisciplinary knowledge of Intercultural Competence of partner organizations into work life oriented curricula on Intercultural Competence for adult learners. As a project output, a work life oriented curricula “European Diploma in Intercultural Competence” was created. The project examined and developed further virtual learning possibilities in order to make it possible to combine studies with work and family life. Special attention was put into inclusion of with migration background students.

Learning process of each participant will be incorporated with their work so that intercultural competence will be used as a tool to understand and solve critical situations in real work life. Therefore the expected learning results will have two levels: 1) Increase of intercultural competence at individual level, and 2) Increase of intercultural awareness and competence at organization’s level. This learning process will emphasize the understanding of one’s own previous experiences and meaning making processes.

Education target groups: The diploma is aimed at professionals holding a bachelor’s degree as a minimum. EDICC target groups are professionals working in areas of education, business, migration and minorities. The emphasis may vary from country to country, depending on the national circumstances of the participating countries. The study programme will offer practical working tools to perceive intercultural competence which enables more efficient and successful work in a culturally diverse context.

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1. Project Objectives

The network of 10 European Universities in the consortium represents the top research in Intercultural Studies in Europe. Best practices in adult education were explored and shared. The needs-analysis, exploitation of results and transfer to the target groups were made in cooperation with dissemination partners who work closely with stakeholders in various social sectors (e.g. employer organizations and lobbies, social welfare institutions, NGOs, schools, public services etc.).

Amongst increasing economic tensions, intercultural competencies will play an important role in the maintenance of social cohesion and peace. The curriculum that was developed aims at training resource-persons who will be able to promote intercultural and multilingual competencies and to develop new, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches for the implementation of intercultural dialogue. The curriculum of the EDICC diploma offers state-of-the-art intellectual engagement with issues of intercultural competence.

The project analyzed the teaching and learning potential of existing virtual learning platforms and other online tools and resources (e.g. Second Life). The influence of virtual culture on intercultural communication and lifelong learning was explored. Existing teaching material were evaluated and new material developed for the curriculum.

A high quality curriculum was developed by a consortium of 10 European Universities and their dissemination partners. The Universities that do not yet offer specific intercultural programs receive support from the other partners to extend their intercultural activities. The results of the project contribute to both the creation and implementation of adult education programmes on Intercultural Competences at the European level.

The consortium partners and their associated partners represented 9 European countries. As the project cooperated with existing networks in higher education and each partner brought to the network experts from partner universities or institutions, the project included expertise from all European countries. Furthermore the project initiated a European Network of Universities teaching Intercultural Competences to start exchange of learning and research practices together with encouraging the dissemination of the results throughout all European countries.

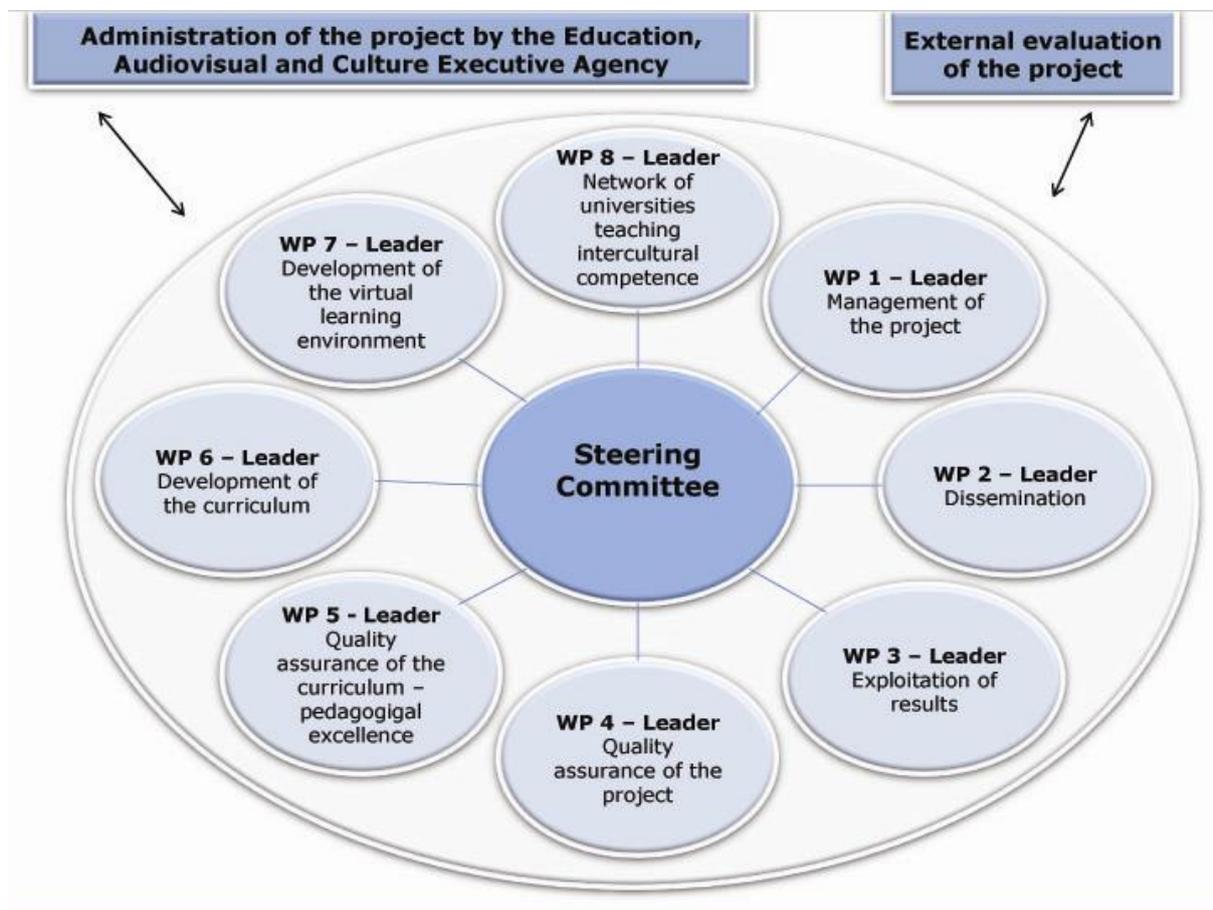
Virtual learning possibilities were explored, pedagogically analyzed and planned with a strong focus on the specific potential of online learning to increase the accessibility of LLL for minority population groups.

In order to contribute to the Lisbon Strategy, national educational strategies were evaluated and experiences from other countries shared. In the transfer of knowledge and methods, cultural aspects were taken into account. The project set up a quality assurance process which focused on a continuous self-reflection of partners on the educational approaches that they adopt in their cultures, in order to effectively translate and adapt them to the context of other countries.

Intercultural Competence is essential in today's Europe. Study programmes developing Intercultural Competence are fairly new still. The EDICC diploma will provide courses that add to the skills learners already possess. The project aimed at creating a conceptualization of intercultural competence from an interdisciplinary, transnational and LLL perspective to update the skills needed in today's working life. By developing Intercultural Competence, the ability to interact with people with diverse backgrounds and, the understanding of cultural diversity grows. The curriculum supports learners in working together efficiently with people from different backgrounds and in viewing diversity as a resource and not as an obstacle.

2. Project Approach

The structure of the EDICC core consortium was described in a following way:



The consortium has also reached out to bring together a voluntary group of enthusiastic researchers and teachers concentrating on a very specific area that might be a relatively small subject in the domestic university (under communication or some other discipline) thereby enlarging the community focusing on intercultural competences. The EDICC programme enables European adult learners to familiarize themselves with research and experiences from different parts of Europe.

The communities of stakeholders (both private sector enterprises and public institutions) from different countries were brought together via locally arranged stakeholder meetings. Sharing of expertise, practical knowledge and best practices, which in turn are expected to have an impact on future research and business actions.

The selected and widened target groups may further be involved in the project's realm and thus can also assist in getting the diploma known more widely and in fund-raising through an "EDICC Alumni Network" to be set up after the first implementation round of the diploma. EDICC newsletters, the updated project website and the proposed e-learning activities can be of further help in disseminating information about the diploma and thus in attracting new participants. Business and not for profit

organizations (foundations and grant-givers) might be interested in funding the project activities or supporting participation of minorities or disadvantaged categories of students in the medium and long term. The EDICC programme developing intercultural awareness and competence for professionals living and working in increasingly diverse societies.

Finally, other international organizations (IOM, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, etc.) than the EU which may be interested in training and further developing IC among their staff, have been informed through ad hoc presentations about the EDICC related developments and thus became sensitized about the diploma. One of the goals of EDICC project was to create a pan-European network of universities teaching intercultural competence. At present the EDICC partnership network has 23 external partners and details have been published on the EDICC website (www.edicc.eu).

3. Project Outcomes & Results

The aim of the project was to create a Curriculum leading to a European Diploma in Intercultural Competence. This aim was fulfilled: the Consortium jointly produced a Curriculum. All the deliverables specified in the project documents and action plans have been realized.

The consortium's cooperation started by conceptualizing Intercultural competence for the context of EDICC. As a result of a discussion and sharing of ideas, intercultural competence was crystallized as "multifaceted intra- and interpersonal processes taking place both on a situational and developmental level in encounters of people with different backgrounds. On the *situational level*, intercultural competence refers to the ability to manage one's intercultural perception, attitudes, knowledge and skills to facilitate intercultural interaction and relationships. On the *developmental level*, intercultural competence is a long-term learning process during which individuals increase their preparedness for future intercultural interaction and relationships".

The diploma is aimed at business people and professionals working in the fields of education and health as well as areas relating to migration and minorities. The curriculum was designed in such a way that participants will be working on topics that relate to their respective professional responsibilities, combining theory with personal experience in their workplace and beyond. Finally, an innovative and socially relevant curriculum concept was completed.

Jointly quality criteria were developed for the curriculum as well as specifications for pedagogical excellence with a view to ensuring the sustainability of the EDICC curriculum and the diploma beyond the project lifetime.

A multidisciplinary curriculum framework and the syllabuses were finalized. A final version presented at the public event on September 12, 2011 in London for the target audience. The EDICC Diploma covers a range of key concepts and overall, the Diploma consists of a total of 30 ECTS. The Diploma contains three core units: *Foundations of Intercultural Competence*, *Intercultural Communication*, and *Developing Intercultural Competence in Work Contexts*. In total these three units include ten themes, notionally 10 times 2 ECTS = 20 ECTS. One unit, *Contextualizing Intercultural Competence*, containing themes 11 and 12 will be elective. A notional 2 times 5 ECTS = 10 ECTS are allocated for them. The first diploma will be offered at Danube University Krems falling in the autumn of 2012.

During the lifetime of the EDICC project a lot of background study and market research was undertaken. The result of that work includes: a list of universities offering studies in intercultural competence (ICC), study programs in these fields but also an exploration and analysis of ICC training activities and tools for Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

To respond to the need for strong links between EDICC studies into professional work, a virtual working environment has been actively tested and promoted. A virtual pilot course in intercultural communication was conducted and as a result, a refined strategy for a blended learning environment was shared. The pilot module conducted

successfully by London in November 2010 using the online platform Grouply included a range of technology-enhanced elements as well as a virtual seminar. It completed the joint Curriculum development and its pilot run and fed directly into the pedagogical design of the mixed-mode, blended learning approach of the planned initial implementation of the EDICC curriculum from 2012.

The special focuses of the second year were Dissemination and Exploitation activities. Towards the end of the planning phase of the diploma, dissemination and exploitation efforts became increasingly important. Emphasis was put on attracting more potential interested in the Diploma and in ensuring ready availability of information about it. The project WebPage (www.edicc.eu) will be constantly updated with the latest dissemination and exploitation news.

Promotional and other marketing material have been produced (brochures, flyers, presentation of EDICC in different European languages, EDICC glossary and media releases etc.). Constant stakeholder work life- dialogues have been maintained and will be developed further.

The EDICC project and its products have been disseminated largely in the partners' home country, but also throughout Europe and beyond. Partners have held information sessions, stakeholder meetings, and conferences about the EDICC project. Some consortium members have also written articles and press releases in national languages for dissemination purposes available on the EDICC partners' web sites.

Networks established during the project with private sector companies and public institutions, but also all 23 external partners will be kept active and their resources utilized after the end of the project. By extension, co-operations are one potential choice to respond to market demands by supplying EDICC programmes.

The post project agreement (PPA) model was finalized during the final Steering Committee meeting at IoE London, September 13, 2011. The agreement covers Intellectual Property Right of the project products and results, and executed the near future cooperation decisions. In addition, the EDICC brand is to officially registered and trademarked. The community trademark (CTM) has been applied for the term 'EDICC' on September 28, 2011.

Internal and external evaluations took place from the start to the end of the project. Numerous e-tools and methods (moderated group discussions, interviews, intertool etc.) were used. The aspects of the project that were evaluated included the products, the processes, quality outcomes of the EDICC consortium and its QA mechanisms, best practice, lesson learnt etc. The external evaluator noted *"In the EDICC consortium, multicultural and interdisciplinary group work has not only produced a high-quality Curriculum, which it was supposed to do, but it also managed to as a group, developed and matured within the task in an extraordinary manner. These innovations and models can be used in other similar projects in the future as well"*.

4. Partnerships

The EDICC consortium consists of nine universities and two institutions with a wide range of expertise and geographical coverage around Europe (9 countries). In the partner selection, academic diversity and competence as well as the interface of theory and practice in the cooperation between the academic staff and the public and private sectors were emphasized. The intercultural nature of the partnership has facilitated interaction and dissemination activities also in countries not involved in the project planning phase, especially in Eastern Europe (Russia, Serbia and Hungary). The Swiss associate partner has brought a strong consideration to migration issues to the syllabus.

The project dissemination plan also included internal communications. Due to the efficiency and flexibility but also distance of the consortium partners, interaction was mainly virtual. The principal communication method was a Moodle virtual platform. In addition, the consortium also had monthly virtual meetings via the Acrobat Connect Pro conference tool. The consortium lead personnel gathered four times in person: in a kick-off meeting in Helsinki, in progress meetings in Madrid and in Krems and finally, for the final seminar and meetings in London. Also there were two Virtual Steering committee meetings during the lifetime of the project.

Additionally, meetings of thematic working groups were held where topical questions were worked on in smaller working groups. The outcomes of these discussions were later on shared in consortium-wide virtual meetings or in the Moodle environment. “Intertool”, a virtual tool for identifying the working culture and for improving the cooperation and team-building within the group, were used to make the group more conscious of the diversity issues within the consortium.

5. Plans for the Future

The EDICC website works as an information provider for curriculum implementers, potential participants and other interested members of the public. Eventually it will provide all EDICC related information targeting the general public in addition to implementation information and directions.

The EDICC project has many innovations and subprojects which enable dissemination and marketing now and after the project. First, the Network has already started to operate as a communication medium of ICC information, events and EDICC news among the participants. A news letter concerning the network is sent periodically to the participants to ensure continuous communication. The expert network currently consists of the twelve EDICC partners and 23 external institutions from eleven different countries. The Network should also grow after the project and aid the continuance of EDICC in addition to ICC information exchange.

Second, the SPICE (Sustainable Programs on Intercultural Competence in Europe) subprogramme would bring great potential to EDICC's future dissemination and sustainability by enabling funds and cooperation between the current and new partners.

Third, the Danube University Krems' has plans to implement the Diploma in the autumn of 2012. This will enable further cooperation among EDICC partners, bring EDICC recognition and help future marketing efforts and recruitment of learners. Partners also have plans to implement parts of the Diploma in cooperation with other partners which aids future dissemination and sustainability.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The objective of the Lisbon Strategy set in 2000 is to make the European Union “the world’s most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.” The EDICC diploma aims to facilitate the interaction between different cultures in the following ways:

- by building a study program with an aim of overcoming, understanding and embracing cultural differences and building a better social cohesion. The study programme attempts to provide its students a set of culturally sensitive working practices to facilitate the adaptation to the globalizing European job market.
- by having a working group of experts representing wide geographic area and a broad spectrum of sciences to build the diploma.
- by continuously exploring and creating study methods and dissemination strategies to facilitate the accessibility and mobility of European and non-European students.

In order to effectively translate and adapt them to the context of different European national realities, the project set up a quality assurance process which assured a continuous self-reflection of the partners on the educational approaches proposed. The national educational strategies and experiences were shared throughout the project.

In line with the Bologna process objective to create a common structure of higher education systems across Europe, the EDICC diploma builds on an idea of a pan-European learning environment where students may follow instruction from any of the participating universities whether virtually or face-to-face.

The pedagogy of the diploma and its theory emphasizes the understanding of one’s own previous experiences and meaning making processes. But also supports the lifelong learning aspect of the Bologna process. The concept of “Intercultural competence” and identification of new skills was the core issue for the project and the partners constructed and further developed these definitions in close dialogue with each other during the process.

As the project was based on a multitude of disciplines exploring intercultural competences from different angles, a joint statement for curriculum framework was prepared;

“Intercultural competence is understood here as a ‘journey’ rather than a ‘destination’, i.e. as a concept that is open to contestation. Therefore, this diploma fosters reflective and analytical engagement by participants with key issues of intercultural competence as articulated in core and background readings included in this document. The understanding of intercultural competence valorised by this diploma is also inherent in the learning outcomes articulated as programme as well as at theme level. Importantly, intercultural competence is understood as situated and located in local, national, regional and global contexts.”

The learning process of each EDICC participant will be integrated into their work in such a way that intercultural competence will be used as a tool to understand and solve critical situations in real work life.

7. Extra heading/Section

Summary of abbreviations included in the Public part of the EDICC reporting:

EAC EA	Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EDICC	European Diploma in Intercultural Competence
EU	European Union
ICC	Intercultural competence
IoE	Institute of Education, University of London
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LLP	Lifelong Learning Programme
NGO	A non-governmental organization
PPA	Post project agreement
QA	Quality assurance
SPICE	Sustainable Programs on Intercultural Competence in Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WP	Work Package

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European Diploma in Intercultural Competence (EDICC) project consortium consisting of the following participants:

P1	University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education (UH)
P2	University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication (JYU)
P3	University of Tartu, Institute of Germanic, Romance and Slavonic Languages and Literature (UT)
P4	Danube - University Krems - University for Continuing Education (DUK)
P5	“Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad (UAV)
P6	Institute of Education – University of London (IoE)
P7	Centro de Estudos Geográficos, Universidade de Lisboa (CEG)
P8	Complutense University of Madrid, the German Department (UCM)
P9	Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Department of International Business Communication (IBC)
P10	Institutul Intercultural Timisoara (IIT)
P11	The Iberoamerican Institute of Finland in Madrid (IIF)
AP1	University of Lugano (USI).

