

UNIVERSITY
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ULLL beyond formal postgraduate education: First experiences from the “University Meets Industry”-project

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industry programs
regional reflection lifelong
education applied university - postgraduate
exchange practitioners
business markets research innovative
students university
learning
knowledge ideas community transfer

Forum for LLL and Knowledge Transfer

By establishing a „Forum for Lifelong Learning and Knowledge Transfer“, the University of Vienna wants to encourage enterprises to engage in a dialog with universities in order to exchange experiences and knowledge about current issues in the industry as well as in academic fields.

For us, knowledge transfer is understood as an exchange process that follows two central objectives:

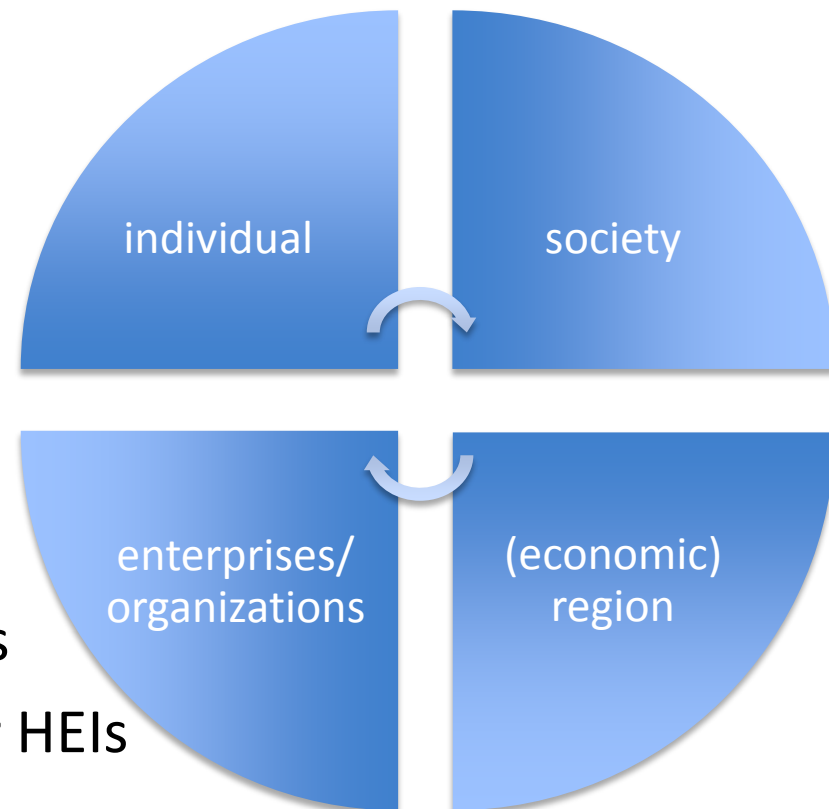
- The **industry** (enterprises, organizations, etc.) and hence the people in their work environments are provided with the opportunity to access knowledge and recent research results at universities. They will receive valuable inputs for their work processes and can develop new strategies for their future endeavors.
- The **university** will receive knowledge about current challenges in practice, hence about the requirements that future university graduates will be confronted with, once they enter the employment market. Additionally, getting to know the „real“ problems of enterprises and organizations will provide the university with new inspirations to further enhance its research.

Forum for LLL and Knowledge Transfer

Goals:

- connect the university with regional businesses & public institutions
- promote lifelong learning (e.g. the idea of the “learning organization”)
- promote Vienna as a knowledge hub & sustainable business location
- provide new ideas for applied research
- impulses for postgraduate programs
- extend the network & include other HEIs

Scope:



Target group

- People from all industries, public institutions, NGOs, regardless of their position
- Scientist, senior researchers
- PhD-students, advances BA/MA students
- People working in intermediary organizations at universities

Supporting the individual learner



individual

- low-threshold activities (cost free, no entry requirements or formal application processes)
- low time investment for “basic” participation, workshop times are compatible with work schedules
- participants experience new learning settings and can become part of a learning network → change of view on university education (lecturer/student relations)
- develop new (research) interests/personal visions
- motivation to engage in further (formal/informal) programs & plan their personal LLL strategy

Promoting LLL within society



society

- providing a platform where people with different background (including non-academics) can exchange ideas and work together on solutions → contribution to social cohesion
- opening up to new target groups, perception of an “open” university that is inclusive
- promoting LLL through accompanying media coverage → pushing LLL as a topic of public interest, raising awareness of how LLL can be realized through participative events

enterprises/
organizations

Supporting organizations & enterprises

- development of new competences, new (scientific) knowledge that can be used within an organizational context
- workshop learning settings provide new ideas on how to solve problems/develop work groups within an organization
- raise an awareness of the importance of interpersonal skills and learning within an organization, become more innovative
- meet advanced students → possibilities for joint research projects/PhD or Master thesis/case study research within an organization, access to highly qualified employees

Supporting the regional economy

(economic)
region

- promoting the emergence of new knowledge and innovation → human capital considered as the essential capital of the future (→ scarcity of raw materials)
- connecting regional enterprises and promote collaborations between them
- involvement of students → possibilities for young entrepreneurs/start-ups
- excellent universities attract innovative businesses

Activities

Activities throughout the year:

- uniMind workshops
- networking meetings “Wein & Wissen”
- uniMind conference & “round up” workshop
- annual expert publication targeting knowledge transfer and LLL
- ring lecture on “LLL & knowlegde transfer”
- internet-based-platform for exchange

Workshop topics 2012

“Effective communication in Management Processes” (April)
(Computer Science / Communication / Agile Management)

>> Reflection: “Network-Meeting” (May)

**“Enabling Spaces –
Providing Spaces for Innovation”** (June)
(Cognitive Science / Translational Studies)

>> Reflection: “Round-Up”-workshop (October)



Knowledge Sharing

Achieving a high level of knowledge...

- Connecting theory and practice
- Reframing the role of the teachers/learners
- Education \neq pure knowledge transfer but rather a negotiation of meaning in a social context
- Invest time for learning to „think and understand reality before acquiring practical skills

... is not that easy



Knowledge Sharing

- Knowledge and skills of a group are more than just the sum of individual competences
- Team learning means: to use everyone's potential, being able to trust other team members, influencing & promoting other teams
- „Dialog“ and „discussion“ as central are techniques for team learning

Learning processes

Successful training

- strengthens action and interaction competences
- allows learners frame their own learning processes
- intensifies feedback and reflection
- provides a framework for learning within the organization
- regards existing organizational learning processes & e-learning
- incorporates the everyday work routine

Workshop Design - Setting

- 1 topic – a lot of perspectives
- 2 scientists (diff. disciplines)
- 30 - max. 70 participants
- theoretical inputs
- group work – real case studies
- group & individual reflection on cases
- individual reflection on learning outcomes



Workshop Design - Setting

3 phases of guided group reflection:



1. Open discussion of
challenges from practice

Guidelines for discussion
and finding a case



2. Targeting one case for
further examination

Theoretical inputs by scientists



3. Finding solutions/
solution approaches

Feedback on outcomes by
scientists

Feedback from the first workshop

Setting:

Exiting: Self-reflection // Reflection as the starting point for change // ideal group size // too many instructions & too detailed // well designed and good timing // Group process was interesting

Topics:

Unexpected topic within a university context // the ideals of the theory will hardly be achieved in practice // person-centered approach was interesting // good feeling about communication competences // openness is important // congruence is important in business contexts // business communication should be on the agenda of all managers

People/Group:

Variety of backgrounds, similar challenges // interesting people and conversations // exchange with people from different backgrounds was good

Benefits:

An event with added value // Exchange between university & practice = win-win // was of personal & professional value // new ideas for master thesis

PARTNERS & SPONSORS

- Ministry of Science and Research
- Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth
- Austrian Economic Chamber – Vienna
- Federation of Austrian Industries – Vienna
- Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research



The bigger picture – Strategic considerations

According to the performance agreement contract with the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research (2010-2012), the University of Vienna will...

- increase its LLL-activities (focus on postgraduate programs) with regard to the European universities' charter on LLL
- design/offer programs that comply with the needs of working professionals -> modularization

The bigger picture – Strategic considerations

Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020

Action line 6: Strengthening “Community Education”

- participative learning processes that support individual empowerment and participation through self-organization
- building networks between educational institutions, NGOs and regional organizations in order to develop educational programs for civil society
- embedding LLL in the regions as a topic of high relevance (initiative “Learning region”)
- role of universities for implementation of these actions is stated

The bigger picture – Strategic considerations

Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020

Action line 7: Promoting learner-friendly work environments

- promoting informal learning processes including their validation
- learning “on the job” should become an integral part of organizational culture
- developing necessary frameworks for part-time continuing education
- strategic partnerships between educational institutions & companies/organizations
- documentation of non-formal / informal learning processes, portfolio-systems

Challenges - Discussion

- creation of a “real” network → “learning community”
- building a core community, while at the same time including newcomers
- future goal: widening the regional scope
- future goal: from impulses to joint-project-development