SeAMK students and Cultural Diversity

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SeAMK students getting to grips with cultural diversity

Six SeAMK students and two teachers participated in the first Prominence Intensive Programme held in Bratislava between 19 and 23 March 2018 to study and explore the topic Different Worlds – Different Languages: Getting to Grips with Cultural Diversity.

 *Photo: Students and teachers participating the first Prominence Intensive Programme.*

Enhanced employability

Companies need interculturally competent employees to operate successfully in the diverse environment of the global marketplace with big corporations as well as SMEs forming the backbone of the European economy. Studying and working abroad as well as cooperating in international project teams improve intercultural competences and communication skills of the students and employees alike.

Against this backdrop, seven universities from across Europe have joined forces to develop interactive online learning material, which will be integrated across university curricula with the ambition to foster the development of students' and employees' intercultural skills and competences. This project, led by a consortium entitled PROMINENCE (PROmoting MINndful ENCounters through intercultural Competence and Experience), is financially supported within the framework of the EU Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships. The project itself was introduced at SeAMK verkkolehti in February 2018.

Intensive programmes facilitate learning and development

Over the period of three years, university partners from Aschaffenburg (Germany), Bratislava (Slovakia), Debrecen (Hungary), Katowice (Poland), Savoie (France), Seinäjoki (Finland) and Varna (Bulgaria) will collaborate to organise three Intensive Programmes (IPs). For each of these IPs, six students per a participating university receive an EU grant to co-finance their study period abroad.

Intercultural topics explored during the IPs include: Languages and Cultural Diversity (Bratislava, 2018),

Managing and Leading in Different Cultures (Aschaffenburg, 2019) and Practising Cultural and Emotional Intelligence across Cultures (Savoie, 2020). Six second-year BBA students from SeAMK participated in the first Prominence Intensive Programme recently held in Bratislava to study and explore the topic. The students spent a truly intensive week studying in international teams representing all the partner universities. The programme included presentations, discussions, team work, video production, international buffet and even a scavenger hunt. The overall experience of the students as well as the participating teachers was positive as they learned a lot about and from other cultures and communication.

Troy Wiwczaroski, the project coordinator of the University of Debrecen, explains the project stating that ‘PROMINENCE invites students to open their minds to listening to what others from different cultural backgrounds are trying to communicate to them… Learning to really listen to others is the first step to building cross-cultural competencies on their ways to a lifetime of intercultural meetings’.

One of the overarching objectives of the project is to further develop the internationalisation strategies of all the partner universities with most of the universities either commencing new Erasmus+cooperation agreements or being involved in ongoing cooperation activities to support student and staff exchange within the European funded flagship programme Erasmus+. It is planned to present the final project results at an international conference in Seinäjoki, Finland, in autumn 2020.

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