



Erasmus+

ISSUE 2 2021



ERASMUS + KA 203 TRANSFORMATION OF A TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE SCHOOL BY MEANS OF BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION

CZECH - SLOVAKIA - CROATIA - LATVIA - POLAND

INTERVIEW WITH THE SCHOOL OWNER FROM CROATIA - ONE OF THE ERASMUS + PARTNERS

by Agnieszka
Pędzimaż and Berislav
Božanović

Agnieszka : Tell me a little about yourself.

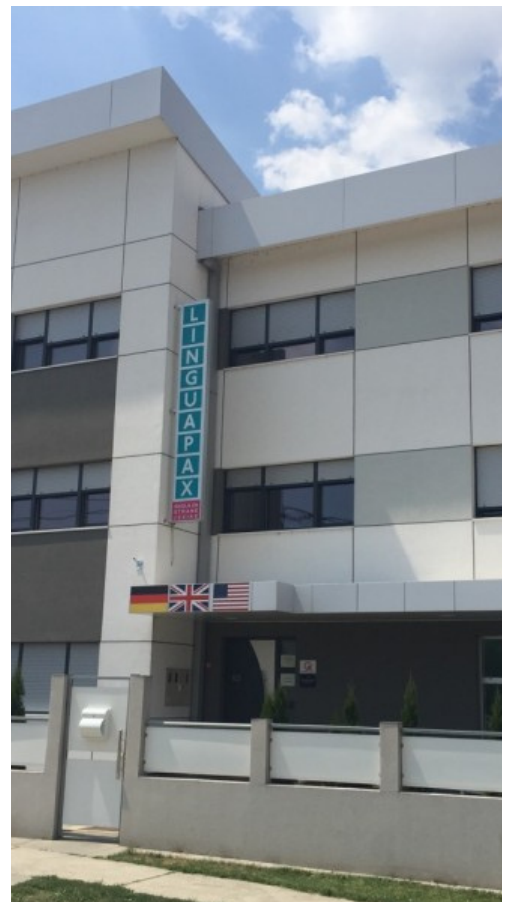
Berislav: I am Berislav Bozanovic, an English and French teacher from Croatia, and principal and owner of Linguapax, a language school located in two Croatian towns - Vinkovci and Vukovar. I am at home when teaching, and probably an eternal migrant in business. My professional interests lie in the realm of quality supportive of reaching the desired learning outcomes. It took me 15 years to create a successful lifelong language development path for learners, based on a firm structure hidden behind gaming, serenity and life joy. Perhaps one might call it learner-centred, but for me it always meant "child-within-myself-centred teaching.

Agnieszka: If you happen to find some free time what do you do?

Berislav: Favourite free-time consumers: sports, scuba diving, skiing, fishing, playing Pacman. Since I have little free time, I have hardly exercised any of these for the past couple of years because there have always been other urgent matters I had to focus on. Not that I can recall any of those matters, but it must have seemed quite important to me at the time.

Agnieszka: What are the reasons you decided to join L&L network?

Berislav: As a member of the Croatian Association of Language Schools CAFL I believe I can help L&L curriculum spread in the language community and hope that our school will become a role model for others in Croatia.



Agnieszka: What can you say about Erasmus + Project ?

Berislav: We just entered our first Erasmus+ project with Jana a couple of weeks ago, and, speaking on behalf of my little Erasmus team and myself, we are really enthusiastic about this project and are looking forward to learning more new and exciting stuff and join L&L network towards the green pastures Jana has envisioned for us all."

Agnieszka: What obstacles do teachers in Croatia face?

Berislav: Teachers as the greatest value of a good school are constantly exposed to the stress and it is necessary to find a framework in which they will be better protected and motivated, and such a framework is almost impossible to secure in difficult conditions. We felt that somewhere for a long time we were stuck with development.

Agnieszka: Will this project help you with the school?

Berislav: The project is based on a vision of moving classical teaching of foreign languages towards innovative and modern learning outcomes, on the introduction of a scientifically agreed business management model and full revenue control, and on addressing a corporate nich that is only superficially covered in most schools. The aim of the project is to implement a new business model that will lead to the introduction of innovations on several levels - program, organizational and marketing. In addition to the redesign of the curriculum, the project should lead to a significant improvement in school financial control, human resources management and winning margin, and most importantly - an increased happiness index in the collective due to a clearer perspective of career advancement and better earnings as motivational levers.

Agnieszka: Why do do you see good perspectives joining the project and L&L network?

Berislav: The project is very promising because it provides answers to the eternal problem of professionals who have found themselves in the role of managers of their own schools and find it difficult to cope with the skills needed for entrepreneurial survival in the market. Once we are sure that it brings reliable indicators of improvement, employee satisfaction and financial growth, the results of the project will be disseminated at the level of the Association for Foreign Languages of the Croatian Chamber of Economy. The project is scheduled to be completed in September 2022.

Agnieszka: Thank you Bero for this interview.

Berislav: You're welcome :)



VIRTUAL PROJECT MEETING (INSTEAD OF PROJECT MEETING IN LATVIA) - 11TH AND 12TH MARCH 2021

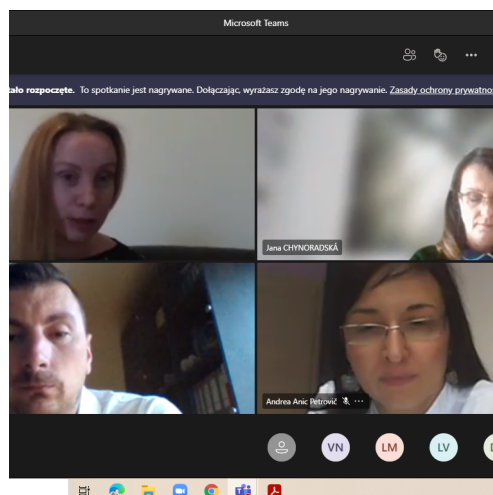
by Agnieszka Pędzimaż

Once again an excellent project meeting, full of inspiration, determination and vision took place on the 11th and 12th of March 2021.

The Erasmus + project "Transforming the traditional language school through business model innovation" has moved to the next stage.

All partners have been presenting Methodical sheets and discussing the Questionnaires - analysis of marketplace and its needs and also analysis of potential customers.

Thanks to the engagement of all partners we could feel the quality of the meeting and productive time.



DO QUALITY CLASSES IN LANGUAGE SCHOOLS EQUAL QUALITY BUSINESS OF LANGUAGE SCHOOLS?

by Berislav Božanović

It is estimated that in Croatia there are about a thousand organizations engaged in foreign language instruction in the form of trades, companies, agencies or institutions. There is still a market in Croatia for this activity, but the supply has been steadily increasing over the past thirty years. One of the effects of relentless competition is the low prices accompanied by a drop in quality, so the profit margins of schools are low, ranging on average from 6 to 9 per cent.

This situation limits development and forces the industry to constantly seek solutions to reduce costs and increase revenues. Among the good solutions are establishing an institution due to tax relief, seeking nich by developing programs in the preschool population or starting online classes, avoiding constant teacher recruitment, highlighting the market through external quality accreditation, investing in digital marketing, etc.

The former market and its mentality, technologies and needs have also changed, and a good part of us who run schools are still the same people as we were ten, twenty-more years ago.



A look back at our case shows that our school had a steady upward trajectory of progression until 2014. Previously, the number of participants grew every year, we recruited new professors, and then we started new development activities by establishing an institution, competing for tenders for EU funds and developing new programs for acquiring key competences, we opened another language center and after many years of preparations managed to pass external certification of the quality of Eaquls.

Then we reached the maximum of our learning and personnel capacities, after which there was a stagnation of high numbers that lasted for several years. This is followed by a gradual decline, largely caused by the intensive economic exodus of the population to the European Union, along with the unprecedented interest of adults in learning German.

The biggest challenge for foreign language schools, however, is the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, whose longevity has strongly affected the business of most activities, and forced our industry to introduce online teaching wherever possible.

In everyday carrying with organizational and technical difficulties, it has been shown that foreign language schools in Croatia have an enviable professional level and quality of teachers and non-teaching staff.

We share the state of stagnation with most foreign language schools in Croatia, and for the first time we lacked a vision - until the call for partnership in "Erasmus + KA 203 Transformation of a traditional language school by means of business model innovation", no. 2020-1-CZ01-KA203-078478.

In addition to our university, partners in the project are HARMONY ACADEMY s.r.o. and PLUS Academia spol. s r.o. from Slovakia, BIEDRIBA EUROFORTIS from Latvia, Centrum Edukacyjne Feniks, sp. z o.o. from Poland and the coordinator UNIVERZITA TOMASE BATI VE ZLINE from Czech Republic.

