

## DISTANT LEARNING PROGRAMME – WUS AUSTRIA

### Contract No. DL2002-02

## REPORT

### Overall and specific objectives of the project

Development and implementation of the University Centre for Distance Education Development is the main aim of the project. The main tasks of the Centre will be as follow: academic staff training, support in developing of the electronic educational materials and contents, administration of WBT software and servers, support in using streaming and videoconferencing technologies in educational process, preparing the University for continuing education.

Specific objectives of the project are particularly defined as follow:

1. To enable realisation of an educational process by using educational technologies that have to provide the following:
  - Distance access to the educational content in the shape of the electronic courses, tests, asynchronous and synchronous communication with academic staff and other users (e-mail, forums, chat, videoconferencing)
  - Distance access to the electronic educational content using streaming technology, particular in the case of distance access to the laboratory processes,
  - Communication with professors and experts from abroad using videoconferencing technology, avoiding their travel costs,
2. To educate academic staff to exploit tools needed for an electronic educational content development,
3. To educate students to use the electronic educational content,
4. To enable students free access to the computer laboratory in the Centre with aim of electronic courses utilization,
5. To enable resources shearing, courses transfer and academic mobility on the national and international bases, in accordance to the lack of academic staff in B&H,
6. To promote universal digital literacy of B&H population through the seminars and courses, using the capabilities of the Centre,
7. To promote an overall view at the applied technologies, where the human factor, including staff training and development, presents as important factor as used hardware and software,
8. To prepare the University for continuing and life-long education.

With the aim of the project realisation, that combine several areas of an organisational, didactical and technological approach to the distance education, the following expert working groups were formed:

- Working group for setting up referred norms and establishing the Centre as one of the University organisation unit (3 members),
- Working group for development and implementation of distance education concept (4 members),
- Working group for students and academic staff training in the area of development and exploitation of electronic educational content (3 members),
- Working group for videoconferencing room design, realisation and exploitation (2 members + 2 foreign experts)
- Working group for streaming technology implementation (not formed yet),
- Working group for servers and software tools administration (not formed yet),
- Working group for preparing and implementing the pilot courses (8 + 1 foreign expert).

Key indicators related to the overall and specific objectives, as well as the sources of information for these indicators, are shown in the logical framework table.

### **Project activities**

The key project activities and its inputs are shown in the logical framework table. The main activity results are as follow:

- 20 trainers and student assistants were trained in Windows OS, MS Word, Dreamweaver 4, WBT Master
- 1 foreign expert was involved in the training seminars
- 4 pilot courses are in the last stage of development
- Cooperation with the IICM Institute, Technical University of Graz, was established in the area of software modules development for WBT Master system, by the students from the University of Tuzla
- Software and hardware tools, as well as books, were purchased, and almost all of them were tested
- Presentation of the project at the Summer University in Tuzla with practical presentation of videoconferencing equipment.

Other results are shown in the logical framework table.

### **Problems and deviations**

One of the proposed pilot courses, **Selected chapters from the clinical and pre-clinical courses**, was eliminated from the project. The reason was a human factor: selected educators were not interested in distance education development and did not attend the training seminars. Another course was selected for the pilot phase of the project: Thermodynamic and thermotechnic, at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (target group: 2 educators and app. 60 students).

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University Center for Distance Education Development is still in the process of formal formation, because of the long procedure of formation of a new organisation unit at the University of Tuzla.

Videoconferencing equipment were tested and presented during the Summer University to the students and University management. The equipment is still at the temporary location because the rebuilding and adaptation of the rooms M1 and M2 is not finished.

Server purchased in the beginning of project realisation has had not enough performances. New server is purchased (2 processors P4 Xeon, 2.2 GHz, 2 HDs, 1GB RAM, RAID controller, app. 10.000,00 KM).

Realnetworks streaming tools, we wanted to purchase, was not available for order because Realnetworks moved to another platform. The new platform offers similar products with better performances. We had to make a new specification of streaming tools, according the project proposal.

Training seminars for the students are delayed to the beginning of the October. We have concluded that the better solution is to train the student using already prepared and published courses. Every educator involved in the pilot courses will train their students in using particular course published in WBT Master.

### **Conclusion**

The most activities that were planned in the project proposal were carried out within its deadlines. Some activities are not realised yet because the required pre-conditions were not accomplished. We expect to carry out all project activities up to the end of October.

The next step, after the realisation of the pilot phase, will be a dissemination of the results through the seminars, published paper, local workshops and international conferences. The organization of the seminar **Distance learning systems and its implementation in the area of higher education in B&H**, for representatives from all B&H universities is already approved from WUS Austria, within WUS Seminar Programme. Seminar will be organised at the beginning of October 2002 at the University of Tuzla.

The evaluation of the published courses should be done and new courses should be published continuously. Training of the larger group of students and educators should be the permanent activity of the Centre.

Centre should start with new activities in the area of life-long and continuing education.

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Additional presentation, audio and computer equipment should be purchased within the DL Programme (multimedia classroom) at the University of Tuzla.

Tuzla, 30.08.2002

Project coordinator

Samra Mujačić, M.Sc.E.E.