

Emerging Modes of Cooperation between Private Sector Organisations and Universities: Implications for the Tuning project

When developing outcomes-based and market-required skills and competences, student-centred and competence-based learning methodologies are very important. These are the main approaches of Tuning project. To develop those approaches, the Tuning project has an established network of interconnected communities of practitioners and learners from academia and the world of work. This working methodology of Tuning project envisages the importance of University Business Cooperation (UBC).

Emerging Modes of Cooperation between Private Sector Organisations and Universities (EMCOSU), as a successful research project on UBC, confirm the lines of research adopted by Tuning projects from all over the world; validating the relevance of collaboration between employers and academicians, as important stakeholders in higher education policy-making. Therefore, the findings and policy implications from EMCOSU link up with the broad objectives and methodology adopted in the Tuning project. These links are mainly discussed under the following headings.

1. Skills and Competence Development

One of the EMCOSU project's main findings is the importance of the skills and competencies that graduates should acquire (Pavlin, 2015). Representatives of enterprises and higher education institutions have emphasized the importance of skills such as, the ability to acquire new knowledge, the ability to use time efficiently, etc., which have also proven to be highly demanded in the Tuning projects. The EMCOSU project results also show that the skills and competences of students and graduates help improve the innovative capacities of enterprises. These insights would encourage policy improvements in the field of teaching learning methodologies, so that new profiles and meta-profiles would be created.

2. Modes of Cooperation

The EMCOSU project analyzed various modes and forms of UBC and found that student mobility and research and development are the most highly reported modes of cooperation (Pavlin, 2015). These findings clearly linked to the Tuning methodology lines, such as facilitating student mobility through a cumulative credit system, promoting research on generic and subject-specific competencies and elaborating meta-profiles for subject areas. As the EMCOSU project recaps the relevance of the Tuning methodology, modes of cooperation between partners would become relevant factors for future research and development.

3. Facilitators of collaboration

The EMCOSU project findings reaffirm the existing working nature of the Tuning network of Communities of Learners. The project identified that mutual trust and commitment and shared motives are the important facilitators of collaboration (Pavlin 2015), which has in reality been proven in the Tuning project. The successful completion of different projects in more than 126 countries and on more than 74 subject areas proved that mutual trust and commitment and shared motives are critical for leading international and intercultural groups respecting the regional needs and autonomy. Therefore, the EMCOSU project confirms the relevance of the Tuning project's approaches to higher education restructuring.

4. Barriers and development path

The EMCOSU project has identified that there are some barriers to collaboration, especially on the side of the higher education institutions and strategic changes are important for future collaboration. Bureaucratic obstacles internal to HEIs are found to be a key barrier to UBC (Pavlin, 2015). This insight would help the Tuning partners to be more active and receptive of further projects, thus resulting in improved educational policies. As highlighted by Tuning project, a practical orientation in teaching and the importance of internship are acknowledged as strategic development paths leading to collaborative projects.

Reference:

Pavlin, Samo (2015) EMCOSU Executive Summary available at <http://www.emcosu.eu/en/project-outcomes/>