

What were the conditions and steps taken that have contributed most to the success of the measure?

The relevance of the network to the needs and interests of the students is important for its success and mainstreaming. The network and its activities are developed by student teachers themselves, they therefore respond directly to their needs and expectations. Furthermore, dedication and commitment of its members and supporters has been crucial for the effective implementation of the network activities and attraction of like-minded students. Besides the local commitment, external support from the university and Centre for Education Research and Teacher Education (PLAZ) allowed network to be registered as official group and provide high-quality content and professional training. Partnerships, networking and strong cooperation with relevant stakeholders were also highlighted as important success factors. The new board is working on reaching out and connecting with more stakeholders, especially among other universities. Possible links with policy makers could be established within this process as well. In the future, to improve its impact, the network could offer more thematic events using different formats and invest more resources in dissemination and attracting more student teachers studying difference discipline (until now the main participants of the Network activities were students of German or social subjects).

Which stakeholders were involved in identifying needs and in the planning and design of the measure?

The idea of the network was born by the coordinator who quickly found support from the University of Paderborn's Department of teacher studies.

Who was involved in implementing the measure?

The network 'Life is Diversity' was created by a group of student teachers and teachers in cooperation with the 'Network of teachers with a migrant background' in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) (Netzwerk Lehrkräfte mit Zuwanderungsgeschichte) and the 'Centre for Education Research and Teacher Education' (Zentrum für Bildungsforschung und Lehrerbildung, PLAZ). The network, which has become a registered university group since 2016, is located at the University of Paderborn. However, some of its activities are not limited to the university and reach out to the community and city of Paderborn.

Who has key responsibility for implementation?

The group consists of about 15 members. However, fluctuation of members is high because new members join and others leave when graduating. Others actors involved in the implementation of the measure consist of university students, lecturers and Professors at the University of Paderborn.

How are the different people involved in implementation being supported (e.g. do they receive specific training?)

The internal commitment and interest of network members and supporters is noteworthy. Most speakers and lecturers waive their fees, and Professors of the University of Paderborn contribute actively to workshops and lectures without payment. As a University group, some funds are available through ASTA – General representation of students (Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss).

What have been the obstacles to introducing the measure? How have they been addressed?

Despite the positive results, the interviewees also highlighted some limitations that can potentially hinder the effectiveness of the initiative: - Students are confronted with time pressure and stress due to the Bachelor/Master system and often lack the time to participate in additional measures; - According to the network's statutes, the board has to change frequently (once a year), which is difficult considering the amount of time invested in establishing the board and its structures; - The high fluctuation of the members of the network is the main limitation to its sustainability.

What has been the impact of the measure?

According to the stakeholders' opinions, the network has enabled the development of student teachers' intercultural sensitivity, and mutual learning. Through preparing future teachers, the network also contributes to the design of schools of the future and to more equality and equity in the education system (PLAZ, 2013). The network enables to raise awareness for issues of diversity and inter-culturality and to reduce prejudice, among both students and university staff. E.g., Speakers and lecturers use the discussion material in their seminars and lectures, beyond the network activities. Furthermore, the network coordinator indicates that the range of students who are interested in topics of diversity and inter-culturality has been widening. The network has an indirect influence on the content of the programmes offered at the university. The initiative offers courses that can be credited for the profile studies 'Dealing with heterogeneity' (Umgang mit Heterogenität) and is relatively flexible in the design of the courses. Feedback from different informal sources indicates that students consider some of the network activities as more effective for their preparation as a teacher than some of the seminars they attend at university. The network provides them with orientation, increases self-confidence and makes knowledge and information available to be directly applied in the classroom. Furthermore, it strengthens the linkage between theory and practice.

Further info (website, contact person e-mail, organisation details)

Website: <https://plaz.uni-paderborn.de/lehrerbildung/besondere-angebote/mitarbeit-in-projekten-und-netzwerken/hochschulgruppe-leben-ist-vielfalt/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LebenistVielfalt/>

Relevant documents, photos or videos

References PLAZ, Successful: 2nd day of practise took place on 26 May (Erfolgreich: 2. Interkultureller Praxistag fand am 26. Mai statt), Press release, 13.05.2013 PLAZ, News from education science and teacher training at the University of Paderborn (Aktuelles aus Bildungsforschung Lehrerbildung an der Universität Paderborn), Issue 25, March 2012 PLAZ, 'The Network of student teachers with and without a migrant background was born' (Studierendennetzwerk von Lehramtsstudierenden mit und ohne Zuwanderungsgeschichte aus der Taufe gehoben), press release, 8.11.2011. University group Leben ist Vielfalt, Potentiale gewinnen, Ausbildung, begleiten Personalentwicklung gestalten [Foster potentials, mentor teaching, shape teacher development], Flyer information meeting, 2011.