

## **SOFT SKILLS at PARIS NANTERRE and throughout EDUC PARTNERS' COOPERATION: a *DOUBLE-BIND* EXPERIENCE.**

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In conjunction with the upcoming end of Educ-Share, we felt it important to give visibility to the second-phase activities that had taken place around soft-skills subject. The human resources strategies which pay attention to soft skills acquirement are becoming increasingly significant for improving the European projects design.

Especially, if we look at the renewed needs in the professional environment triggered by



the digital era changes, it is clear how human resources management is coupled with new issues and challenges. Indeed, as the task leader on the topic from the outset, UPN has implemented two interconnected actions giving space to a reflection both on research contents and possible co-operations looming in the development of transversal skills through academic communities.

First, a physical meeting was organized by UPN which involved not only the local community but also significant representatives of EDUC Alliance. They travelled to Paris for two study-days with the aim of fostering exchange on opportunities addressed to the university staff for acquiring new skills. At the same time, UPN argued for deepening a research-oriented approach to Soft Skills in order to evaluate how disciplines from Humanities observe the employment conditions within present society.

Therefore, divided into two distinct moments, the meeting included a seminar part, in the form of a conference, and another more hands-on part including workshops and roundtable discussions.

On September 19 and 20, 2023, the EDUC Soft Skills meeting titled ***Acquiring, transmitting, valorizing 'soft skills' in the academic milieu: an EDUC experience*** welcomed contributions from several UPN researchers aiming to provide theoretical insights for implementing a constructive Soft Skills training methodology. Then, researchers

and professors spanning Applied Sociology, Information and Communication Sciences, Work psychology, Foreign languages teaching, and University Engineering in Higher Education, presented their findings by intersecting a « soft skills query » with professional contexts and levels, especially the academic ones.

With the purpose of stimulating an interdisciplinary debate, all the participants contributed to very interesting discussions. Partners reported on the processes embraced within their faculties highlighting good existing policies and devices for the development of such skills, dedicated to their staff. Moreover, focus was directed on spotting the contribution of Human Resources while enhancing soft skills activities. Through a comparison of different practices, partners shared insights from experiences previously carried out within their own university.

Also, during the workshops performed with brainstorming techniques and role-playing, participants engaged in a genuinely productive interaction, grounding on personal know-how and contributing from within to the emergence of a deeper reflection on the theme. The more interesting result led to the awareness that engaging in activities focused on soft skills prompts us to interact with new communicative transitions, such as digitization and technologization of professional and social relationships.

We jointly yielded some good material for in-depth analysis and researches endorsing the construction of the second edition online Soft-Skills training programme. It has been initially conceived as an opportunity for EDUC staff -both administrative and academics- to interact within an international context. Indeed, by employing English as a *lingua franca*, the training's goal was precisely to allow interaction among a heterogeneous audience, witnesses to multiple concerns related to the management of daily professional lives, specifically in academic structures.

Throughout all the last November, the online training sessions took place, led by various professors and trainers from EDUC universities, with truly positive results while stating the reception of the training and the EDUC staff participation.

If we consider some feedback provided by participants, such as « *I really appreciated the online training session and it profoundly inspired me with a lot of interesting tools... For the future, I would appreciate similar training sessions and tips on learning strategies when two or more languages are at stake... I think it is also very important that different work levels come together in order to run such a transformation project... It fosters cooperation and better knowing each other* » a desire for dialogue and interaction between different academic services clearly emerges. Also, the successful results match the potential for implementing and creating new human and professional environments within EDUC framework and settings. These spaces would welcome the value of differences, multidisciplinary skills and transversal attitudes, international dialogue, considering them as assets to be acquired by

all, and crossing very actual inquiries. Truly, the positive outcomes reinforce the value of such training programmes and emphasizes the ongoing efforts to integrate Soft Skills into academic and professional spheres.

In summary, the dedication to Soft Skills promotion, as demonstrated by the Educ-Share project and UPN's leadership in this endeavor, not only does it address current professional needs, but it also lays the groundwork for the future in both human and professional living worlds.



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