UZHELTH
Higher Education Structures to Enhance Public Health Learning and Teaching in the Republic of Uzbekistan

Stocktaking Survey

Co-funded by the Tempus Programme of the European Union
UZHELTH is a Consortium of European and Uzbek partners that cooperate to build the foundations for an innovative and integrated Public Health sector in Higher Education, using Tuning methodology to create tools for quality, transparency and visibility in a competence-based student-centred context. Supported by Tempus, it comprises 17 partners, including the Uzbek Ministries responsible for Agriculture and Water Resources, Public Health, and Higher and Secondary Specialized Education; 10 Universities and Institutes of Higher Education in the Uzbek Republic and four European Universities with long-standing expertise in Tuning and in the relevant Subject Areas.

**European Union**
- University of Pisa
- Ghent University
- University of Porto
- Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra

**Uzbekistan**
- Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Ministry of Public Health
- Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education
- Andijan State Medical Institute
- Bukhara State University
- Bukhara State Medical Institute named after Avicenna
- Karakalpak State University
- Samarkand Agricultural Institute
- Samarkand State Medical Institute
- Tashkent Medical Academy
- Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute
- Tashkent State Agrarian University
- Tashkent State Agrarian University, Nukus
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UZHELTH 'Stocktaking’ Survey

In the framework of the implementation of the final stages of the UZHELTH Tempus project, it was planned to make a "Stocktaking" survey among the end-users, beneficiaries and other project stakeholders.

I. Introduction

Based on the decisions made by the project Consortium at the pre-final meeting held in December 2016 at the University of Pisa, the survey was composed of two subsections. The first section was designed to study general awareness about the project, gathering and analyzing the opinions of project beneficiaries and the academic community, team members, students and other relevant stakeholders about it. The objective was to assess the attitude of participants and stakeholders to UZHELTH, and also to determine how successful the partners had been in disseminating information about it. The second section of the survey was devoted to a deeper study of the views and experiences of the project participants themselves, in order to use the resulting insights in organizing the future continuation and sustainability of the project, and contributing also to the Final Report.

Place and date of completion

The stocktaking was carried out in the Republic of Uzbekistan, by the 10 UZHELTH partner universities and the representatives of the three partner Ministries (Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources). It was implemented in January and February 2017.

Research methods

Two methods were used:
1. Evaluation of awareness of and attitude to the project – 1000 participants were planned (General awareness and attitude survey - AAS)
2. In-depth interviews –100 participants planned (In-depth interview - IDI)

Respondents

1. 1016 AAS participants, including:
   a. Students
   b. Masters
   c. Doctoral students
   d. Teachers
   e. Administration
   f. Other stakeholders

2. 66 IDI participants, including:
   a. Project team members of the Uzbek universities
   b. Students taking part in the project mobility
   c. Representatives of the Ministries
II. Results

A. General awareness and attitude survey (AAS): Evaluation of awareness of and attitude towards the project

The evaluation of awareness and attitudes to the UZHELTH project was carried out by interviewing respondents in accordance with approved questions that were developed during the pre-final meetings at the University of Pisa in December 2016. The AAS Survey consisted of only 10 questions (2 questions on the definition of the employment status of the Respondent and his/her University, as well as 8 questions directly bearing on the awareness study).

The model adopted for the survey was a matrix such as those used for "marketing research on the company brand".

Since the UZHELTH project also had great importance for the modernization of degree programmes in Public Health and was the first to present to the Uzbek scientific community such concepts as "comprehensive understanding of public health" and "sectoral qualifications framework", it was decided to study how well the Consortium had done in promoting the above-mentioned definitions, including how the Public Health training modules developed have found their place in the process of teaching public health disciplines, and thus to make a prediction about the future sustainability of the project.

Questions used for the AAS study
The following questions were designed, for use on-line, for the awareness study:

1. Please specify your University or Institute
2. Please specify your occupation or position
3. Are you aware of the Tempus project UZHELTH?
4. If yes, please indicate where you learned about the UZHELTH project.
5. Did you take part in the new modernized Public Health Module in Framework of the Tempus UZHELTH Project?
6. Do you think this module will increase your effectiveness as a Public Health Professional?
7. How the Module has influenced your outlook?
8. Do you have suggestions for improving the Public Health Module?
9. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the new Public Health Module:
10. Are you interested in finding out about UZHELTH?

The implementation method of the study
Due to the large number of respondents it hope to consult, the project consortium decided to use the capabilities of Google Drive (Google Form) to conduct the survey.

Respondents: For the entire period of the study AAF (15 February to 11 March 2017) 1016 respondents took part (the stated target was 1,000 respondents). Thus the first conclusion that the project Consortium can make is that the primary target was
achieved. Based on this number of participants, statistical reliability was successfully achieved and the findings from this survey are applicable to all Uzbek UZHELTH partners.

Results:

1. Please specify your University or Institute (Diagram 1)

Diagram No. 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to the universities that participate in the UZHELTH project. In general, there is a fairly even distribution of survey participants; however, two universities of the consortium did not cover the full number of planned respondents. Nonetheless, since some universities consulted more people, the overall goal of at least 1,000 respondents was successfully achieved.

2. Please specify your occupation or position (Diagram 2)

Diagram No. 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to their position or role at the University. It should be noted that the overwhelming majority of the respondents are students of different levels of training (first level students were 428
people, or 42.1% of the participants; students of the second level were 259 or 25.5% of the participants; the participants of the third level were 66, or 6.5%). Also, one fifth of the respondents belonged to the academic faculty – 20.1%, or 211 participants, and the remaining participants were administration and technical staff (49 persons).

3. Are you aware of the Tempus project UZHELTH (Diagram 3)

Diagram No. 3 shows the result of the respondents' answers to the question of awareness about the project Tempus UZHELTH. The diagram shows that more than 90% or 924 participant were aware of the project. Overall, this result shows very high awareness of the project in the Uzbek partner universities. Thus, we can conclude that the work on promotion of the "brand" UZHELTH in the community of universities of Uzbekistan was conducted at a very high professional level and that the project Consortium achieved good results.

4. If yes, please indicate where you learned about the UZHELTH project (Diagram 4)

Diagram No. 4 shows the results about which were the main information channels, by which the information about the UZHELTH project was obtained. In this regard, the 90% of the respondents who answered that they were aware of the UZHELTH project were asked to indicate the most frequent channels by which they had obtained information about the project. At this point the respondents could choose several answers.
The above graph (Diagram 4) presents the main transmission channels. The most popular and "successful" in transmitting information were the following 4 channels: 
a) through the organization of seminars and presentations (461 persons); b) through the websites of universities and the project website (410 respondents); c) through friends and classmates (396 persons); d) via the Bulletin Board in the partner universities of the project (322 people).

The next cluster by popularity comprised another group of information channels: a) through brochures of the project (236 persons); b) through posters on the project (203 persons); c) through participation in educational exhibitions (134 persons); d) through the publications of the NEO+ Office in Uzbekistan (99 persons).

Less-used channels were information received through the departments of foreign relations and local activities of the faculties.

Thus, we can safely conclude that focus on the first cluster of information dissemination, namely dissemination through seminars based on the UZHELTH Information Centres, publication of information on the websites of the universities, the maintenance of UZHELTH project website, and students speaking about the module on Public Health, as well as regular publications about the activities and competitions of the project on the bulletin boards, has led to success in achieving high awareness of the UZHELTH project.

5. *Did you take part in the new modernized Public Health Module in Framework of the Tempus UZHELTH Project?* (Diagram 5)

In order to study the issue of practical implementation of the module developed on Public Health, the project Consortium asked the respondents whether they had taken part in this module.
The participants' responses, represented in Diagram 5, show that 66% or 671 respondents had participated in the new module on Public Health: these are mostly students of the first and second levels of higher education. A part consisted of teachers who participated in seminars on the new module. In general, the conclusion can be drawn that in all universities in one form or another there is a study module based on the new UZHELTH public health approach. And 34% or 345 persons did not participate in study course. That suggests that in some universities a new module is not present in all directions or degree programmes, although they are present in the target departments, which, in principle, meets the requirements of the project.

6. *Do you think this module will increase your effectiveness as a Public Health Professional?*(Diagram 6)

In the Diagram 6, out of 650 responses received from those who participated in training in the new PH module, the majority of the participants, 97.5% or 634 people answered "Yes" and only 2.5% or 16 people answered "No" with regard to an
increase in their future effectiveness in their profession. Thus, the module developed on Public Health, is very widely thought to make a definite beneficial contribution to the future development of the specialist in this area. Of course, the answer "Yes" does not allow us assess exactly in what way the respondents think their effectiveness will be improved, nor what competences were achieved in the learning process; nevertheless the results indicate an overall positive opinion of participants about the knowledge, skills and abilities gained in the framework of the new UZHELTH module.

7. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the new Public Health Module (Diagram 7)

The above graph (Diagram No. 7) shows the results of the evaluation of the overall satisfaction with the learning achieved thanks to the PH module, where "5" indicates the highest level of satisfaction; 419 respondents indicated it. The "4", indicating a slightly lower satisfaction level, was chosen by 191 respondents, whereas the rating "3" was given by 45 respondents, which means an overall acceptable level of satisfaction from learning thanks to the module. The graph shows that ‘very high’ and ‘good’ levels of satisfaction in the new module were declared by the vast majority of participants in the PH training modules (510 participants). Less than 10% reported ‘acceptable’ levels of satisfaction, which, in any case, in the opinion of the project Consortium needs to be further explored in order to bring these respondents also to
good and high levels of satisfaction from training according to the newly developed UZHELTH framework for the Public Health module.

8. **How has the Module influenced your outlook? (Diagram 8)**

![Diagram showing the distribution of responses about the impact of the PH module](image)

Diagram No. 8 shows the distribution of responses about the impact of the PH module, in the opinion of the respondents, towards public health from the students’ point of view. Of the 660 respondents, 58.3 per cent or 385 people did not answer this question; 24.4% or 161 participant chose to answer the question and noted that their view on public health has changed for the better and sometimes in a superb way. 1.1% of participants noted that, in their opinion, nothing has changed or the changes have been weak. 13.8% or 91 people said that they formed new competences in public health, agriculture, food safety, veterinary and ecology, as well as improving their capacities for interaction and their impact on public health. Moreover, another competence mentioned was the English language, therefore we can assume that the literature for the modules was mainly in English. And 2.4% of participants indicated that they completely changed their outlook about the processes of public health in its new form, as presented in the learning module developed within the framework of the UZHELTH Tempus project.

9. **Do you have suggestions for improving the Public Health Module?**

The free text answers to the qualitative question about recommendations from the students and teachers of the module also gave much food for thought. Therefore, the
project consortium is very carefully studying every recommendation received during the survey.

In general, the key note of all the recommendations is that the module must be maintained and developed further, and that there is no need to stop at the results already achieved. Moreover, a number of the recommendations suggest expanding the module so that it becomes an independent degree programme, strengthening the elements of inter-sectoral interaction. Also, some respondents suggested that it would be useful to increase opportunities for students’ learning not only in Uzbekistan, but in the partner universities of the project, through courses, seminars, conferences and joint research. To conclude in relation to this issue, there is a strong feeling that the number of hours of teaching devoted to this module should be increased.

10. Are you interested in finding out about UZHELTH?(Diagram 9)

Of course, the project consortium was interested in the answers to this question given by people who did not take part in the project and did not know about the project at the time of their participation in the survey.

Of the 345 respondents who were not informed about the UZHELTH project 88.1%, or 304 people, would like to know more about the project; 8.1%, or 28 people did not answer this question; and 3.8% or 13 people declared that they are not interested in the project and did not want to know about it.

Overall, the data resulting from this question showed that in general, the bulk of respondents are very interested to receive information about the project and learn more about it, and also participate in a module on public health.
In conclusion, the first part of the survey, the project consortium would like to acknowledge the overall high awareness of the project, the active participation of students in training in the new module on public health and increased professional interest in further improving public health training in the various subject areas.

B. In depth interviews (IDI)

Questions:

1. Have there been changes in your Institution's course offer because of UZHELTH? Please describe them.
2. Have there been changes in your approaches to Learning, teaching and assessment? Please explain
3. Have you implemented or modified your Public Health related course units in line with UZHELTH results? How? Please explain
4. Have you found ways of fostering closer collaboration among the Public Health professionals from different disciplines and sectors? Please explain
5. Have you presented the UZHELTH findings to others? Please explain
6. Have your mobile students shared their experiences with professors and other students? With what results?

Research methods

In-depth interviews were conducted directly with members of the project teams, and with the students who had participated in mobility. The interviews were conducted in English. The interviewers also explained some of the questions to the participants, and asked the respondents to formulate answers as widely as possible. Thus, the second part of the Stocktaking is a general study that based on a qualitative research method.

Respondents

During the stocktaking period (from 5 January to 15 February 2017) interviews were conducted with 66 people (the goal was 100 respondents), so the first conclusion that the project Consortium can draw is that in this case the first goal was not achieved: besides 4 Universities had not sent their responses from the experts. However, the findings from this study with some exceptions can be applied to all UZHELTH Uzbek partners.

Results

1. Have there been changes in your Institution's course offer because of UZHELTH? Please describe them.
The main changes represented were using the "Tuning" method in the process of development and modernization of study programmes. Most experts noted the importance of public consultation and the involvement of an increasing number of stakeholders to discuss the new components and competences. A number of answers contained the names of newly open courses and directions of research in the field of public health and of the disciplines related to this subject. Experts at the level of Vice-rectors, Deans and Heads of the courses referred to the introduction of specific competences in all modernized courses in the framework of the project, as well as in other related disciplines. Some experts noted the influence of the results of the UZHELTH project for the development of new laws and regulations, in particular, the new edition of the law on veterinary medicine.

2. Have there been changes in your approaches to Learning, teaching and assessment? Please explain

Some experts commented on the changes in learning, teaching and assessment; however, other experts said more about the individual changes, indicating that general approaches to assessment and learning in Uzbekistan are strictly regulated. Some experts answered this question superficially, indicating components of training such as e-learning, the use of business games and practical exercises. More positive were the changes noted by those who had participated in the student mobility, and who are now beginning to teach in their universities. They noted the importance of their experience in European universities, as well as the use of some new teaching methods.

3. Have you implemented or modified your Public Health related course units in line with UZHELTH results? How? Please explain

All the experts noted that the module in their universities is taught, in one form or another, with specific areas of training. Someone of the experts confirmed that the modules were developed and taught at Bachelor level, some experts noted that there was more focus on teaching them at Master levels. Some experts noted the importance of workshops for teachers and other professionals interested in public health.

4. Have you found ways of fostering closer collaboration among the Public Health professionals from different disciplines and sectors? Please explain

In general, experts found it difficult to answer this question. Some of the experts noted existing experience in the field of organization of joint research, some told about the integration of public health in the field of agriculture and veterinary medicine. However, in the responses of the experts we did not observe as much general strengthening of inter-sectoral cooperation as we would have wished.
5. Have you presented the UZHELTH findings to others? Please explain

All experts confirmed and cited a number of practical examples on how dissemination of information on the results of the UZHELTH project was achieved. Moreover, some experts confirmed that they had already started research projects in the field of public health and about its relationship with the various disciplines. A number of experts mentioned the dissemination of information to professionals from other areas.

6. Have your mobile students shared their experiences with professors and other students? With what results?

All experts confirmed that students who participated in mobility had shared their experience to a very good level. Moreover some students have already started their career as teachers and are teaching the modules developed. According to the responses of the experts, the UZHELTH student mobility aroused huge interest among classmates, including students of other universities which are not partners of the UZHELTH project.

III. Conclusions

From the Stocktaking survey, we may draw the following conclusions.

1. The UZHELTH project, according to information received, successfully completed all its tasks;
2. The UZHELTH "Brand" has been successfully promoted at University level and at the level of the scientific community of Uzbekistan;
3. In all Uzbek partner universities, courses in public health in the new comprehensive understanding, taking into account related disciplines, are now successfully running;
4. The participants in the mobility indicate its high efficiency;
5. There is a clear understanding of the fundamentals necessary to achieve sustainability of the project after its financing;
6. A number of agreements between EU and Uzbek universities partners on mobility have been signed and several projects have already been successfully implemented;
7. The academic community and the students appreciate the modules developed, but there is a clear understanding of the need for further improvement of the modules, including the development of a separate master's programme in Public Health, including the related disciplines.
8. In some other universities in Uzbekistan new learning modules based on the results of the UZHELTH project have been launched.
9. For Uzbekistan it has been very important to promote further the process of creation and modernization of educational programs with support of the Tuning approach;

10. The key reference points established on the development of educational programs in the field of medicine, agriculture, ecology and veterinary sciences have found their role in the process of modernization of all educational programs in Uzbekistan.

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Presented to the UZHELTH consortium meeting of March 2017; revised on the basis of further data.