

Summary of the training in Valencia at UPV, 4/3 till 8/3 2019.

The 9th RO Valencia Training & Coaching Event for International Officers.

A group of about 40 participants, from all corners of Europe attended this staff week. Claudio, the International Officer at UPV, and the person who mainly led the training week, actually mentioned the main idea of this week at the very beginning.

'Human based international relations'.

When you look up the definition of 'networking', this is what the dictionary gives you:

networking

the action or process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts.

1.

Yes, we were keen to exchange information! But before that, we had to change our attitude, improve our communication. We were eager to learn all about making our jobs more exciting, making our work life easier and more enjoyable.

It was no tough training, no boring and empty concepts, no 'excellence policies', quality assurance, It was all about experiencing, sharing...

Fresh airs into your lungs....and brains.. Straight into action !

Claudio's morning meetings:

Lessons:

Listen to people, learn from them

- Be generous: first give, then take

- Solve problems

- Be flexible

- Be innovative

This was the first slide he showed us. Yes, we were convinced we knew all this.

And then he came with the results of the university, some key figures of the incoming lecturers, incoming students and left us very impressed. Their focus seems to work.

Their main idea is that International Relations are all about human relations.

Internationalization ideals are to be put into practice through basic human relations.

-ETSIAMN INTERNATIONAL SEMINARS IN LIFE SCIENCES are organised at UPV. Several guest lectures in Life Sciences are planned in courses during the year. Some guest lecturers come on a regular bases, such as Ghent University, giving lectures about Industrial Biotechnology, food allergy, ..

It concerns a regular elective course of 6 ects, and is open to their own and exchange students. The evaluation is done through individual reports at the end of the sessions.

It concerns introductions to current research developments in LS Problem solving, and emphases on teamwork, debate & language skills. The guest lecturers only costs are: the courtesy presents (dinner, bottle of wine, ...) the university provides at the end of the sessions. The lecturers count on STA mobility grants from their home Institutions to cover their travel, accommodation and living expenses.

Some qualitative outcomes for the university is organized, regular and fluent teaching staff mobility Community, the possibilty to provide the students Internationalization at home,

Improved institutional visibility, likewise initiatives at partner Institutions, and affordable credit points for international students. An international program, with an open view on the world!

During this meeting, Claudio made us discuss if it would be interesting to implement any ISLS-like program in our institution, and what our thoughts are about to implement one in our institution, and *how*.

The last morning meeting, on Friday 8/3, was centered around the fact whether or not we are 'happy' in our role as International Officer. Do you like your job? A question we sometimes get from relatives, friends. Give us an example of a pleasant feeling you have when doing your job.

The opinions were rather unanimous, most people of the group really like their jobs. The main focus was human relations. How beautiful it is to hear the expressed gratitude of an international student, lost in a country that is not his, you just were able to help. How fulfilling is the job when you were able to support them, to give them the extra push they needed at that very moment. In the end, it's all about these moments.

They ended the morning sessions with the same slide they started with. Love and quality time....

2. In Paula's Seminar we had coaching lessons.

One of the session, she started with this video
<https://www.festivalnikon.fr/video/2018/1047>

She took us outside under the Valencian sun to do some team building games.

On the first day, she made us stand in line, having the first person communicate an action with a feeling to person number 2, while others could not watch what was going on. The message did pass the whole line of participants, only to find out that half of the message was lost along the way. The feeling even totally disappeared, in other words, in the end, only a fraction of what was communicated to person number 2 was left.

It's a game some of us remember from our childhood. But even being adults now, in our job positions, we should reflect : active listening and observations usually enrich performance and satisfaction.

On the second day, we did the moon landing game.

We were a member of a space crew scheduled to meet with the mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. However, due to mechanical difficulties, our own ship was forced to land at a spot 200 miles from the meeting point. During re-entry and landing, a lot of the equipment on board was damaged and, since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200-mile trip.

15 items were listed as being intact and undamaged after landing. Our task was to rank them in terms of their importance for our crew, to allow them to reach the rendezvous point. The 'expert' answers were compiled by a team of scientists and engineers at NASA.

We learned that the scores of the answers we had to write down by ourselves were scoring much worse compared to the ones we gave out after discussing them in our group.

It helped to encourage communication, cooperation and decision making skills among our group of people.

The next day and the day after that, she took us through a labyrinth game. Team building games help people develop a range of skills to do with cooperation, problem solving, decision-making and leadership. They can be a useful to improve important skills i.e. working together, making choices (guidance), and trusting others (faith). The aim of Labyrinth was for our group to work together to all find our way through the maze. There was only one correct path through the maze (created by the leader) The path could go left, right, forward, or diagonally. We had to create a 10x10 grid on the floor using masking tape. Only one person could enter the labyrinth at a time, testing each square to discover the correct path. After each move the game leader indicated if we were standing on the correct path or had made an incorrect move. With a correct move the participant could continue. However, with an incorrect move we had to return to the beginning of the labyrinth.

Good communication, listening skills, cooperation and organization between the group were required to complete the labyrinth.

Our reflection • What did it feel like to be in the maze? • How did we determine the correct path? • What strategies did the group use to remember it? • How was the level of support from the group? • What would we have done better a second time?

Now, back at your job positions, we have to remember that thinking out of the box, being able to consider other colleagues capacities even when we feel sure, active listening and observations enrich our performance.

Paula brought a different herb from her own garden every day, and made us all smell the herb or the leaf, in order for us to create a memory of the days together through scent. Scent brings us back to certain places, certain people, even if it happened years ago...

3. Eduardo showed us all around Valencia, making us aware of details we normally never would have seen. Making the group bonding stronger. Amazing adventure !



Overall, a great experience!

Personally for me, the emphasis was on the networking. This was no superficial week, sitting in classrooms with just a bunch of other people. This was an emotional week, allowing us to make strong contacts with other International Officers, opening the way to easy contacts for facts and figures later on, moreover, making true friends!

Hasta luego, all the best!

