

Immaterial TEMPUS Effects as Incentives for Development of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions*

Dainius Jakimavičius

Director of the Lithuanian TEMPUS Office

A. Volano g. 2/7, 2691 Vilnius, Lithuania

Tel. 629 140; Fax. 226 301

E-mail: tempus@ktl.mii.lt

The TEMPUS program is active for 6 years in Lithuania, the first Joint European Projects being launched in September 1992. This is a long time span which gives us the right to consider the program as the event. A lot of measurable outcomes were achieved at individual Lithuanian universities and faculties by means of 54 TEMPUS Joint European Projects. During the years 1992–1996, 886 staff mobility flows from Lithuania to the European Union and 568 flows from the European Union to Lithuania were financed, over 500 Lithuanian students benefited from studies abroad.

Measurable (therefore, visible) results can advocate effectiveness of TEMPUS method which was used with success by academic networks of Lithuanian and European Union institutions of higher education.

However, measurable outcomes cannot be envisaged as the only achievements of the program. A lot of indirect effects were revealed when applying demand-driven bottom-up TEMPUS method¹ on the academic environment. Those indirect effects in its own turn stipulated accurate implementation of objectives formulated by means of TEMPUS Joint European Projects.

* Proceeding of the Final Symposium of TEMPUS Structural Joint European Project "Education for Information Management in Lithuania". Vilnius, 2nd of July, 1998.

¹ The programme itself has to project the top-down accession-driven frame on real and measurable needs.

The aim of the present outline is to reveal those “immaterial” outcomes of TEMPUS presence in Lithuania and try to forecast how those outcomes can influence on future ways of development of Lithuanian institutions of higher education.

TEMPUS method

The TEMPUS method has its strategic (top-down) and tactical (bottom-up) parts.

Strategic (top-down) part is based on well-timed channeling of general country's needs and translating them into objectives which could be developed later by means of TEMPUS Joint European Projects.

Tactical (bottom-up) part is based on internal potential of Lithuanian institutions of higher education and their preparedness to embed general strategies into local context.

Balancing of those two parts (more precisely, finding the ratio how the instructive the top-down part has to correlate with the bottom-up initiatives) determines local nature of the program. Being aware that success of the TEMPUS program rests on shortening the distance between the “top-down” and the “bottom-up” we have to admit that proportions of each component strongly depend on the local situation.

Dynamics of TEMPUS program

National TEMPUS priorities represent the strategic part of the program. TEMPUS priorities in Lithuania intended to give comprehensive and clear guidelines how general objectives could be implemented by TEMPUS tools. Needs and preparedness of Lithuanian institutions of higher education, of course, were reflected.

Evolution of the national priorities is influenced by the dynamics of TEMPUS objectives, especially in the pre-accession stage.

Three phases of the TEMPUS program (TEMPUS, TEMPUS II, TEMPUS II bis) have been reflected by four sets of national priorities in Lithuania.

1. The *first phase* of TEMPUS program in Lithuania (TEMPUS I, 1992–1994) determined orientation of national priorities aimed at establishment or extension of international contacts of academic co-operation, especially

within the subject areas such as management, business administration, applied economics, finance and banking, law, international relations and diplomacy, etc. However, no advice was given how problems within individual subject areas should be tackled.

2. The *second phase* of TEMPUS program in Lithuania (TEMPUS II, 1994–1998) was marked by the shift from vertical subject-oriented priorities towards horizontal ones. Priorities of 1995/96, contrary to those of the previous years, were not oriented to specific subject areas, but indicated problems which had to be solved by means of TEMPUS JEPs. Three priority areas of 1995/96 have covered the most important horizontal aspects such as student mobility, non-curricular activities within Lithuanian universities, and co-operation of universities with their environment. Those three areas are considered as an embryo of Socrates/Erasmus, university management and Leonardo trends which were developed later.

3. After the Commission paper on pre-accession policies was adopted at the meeting of European Council in Essen (December 1994), Lithuanian national priorities for 1996/97 were used to reflect the most important aspects of Lithuanian pre-accession needs. Priority on student mobility has requested to introduce academic course credit transfer systems or mutual academic recognition of study periods. Improvement of teaching of subject oriented foreign languages was agreed as an important tool to facilitate Lithuanian participation in the EU higher education programs. The Lithuanian national priorities for academic year 1997/98 became more targeted towards pre-accession needs. In that respect, a detailed set of activities have been designed related to preparation of Lithuanian institutions of higher education to EU Socrates and Leonardo programs by means of reinforcement of administrative structures and implementation of methodologies and organizational decisions to introduce European Credit Transfer Systems (ECTS).

4. The *third phase* of TEMPUS program in Lithuania (TEMPUS II bis, 1998–2000) is aimed to resolve both general and focused statements of the European Commission “Agenda 2000 – Commission Opinion on Lithuania’s Application for Membership of the European Union”. Besides direct and practical implication of Lithuania’s pre-accession needs – a concept of “institution building” which could lead to elimination of the indicated short-comings by means of offering training to sectors with the

lack of administrative skills, – the TEMPUS program tends to be more social-oriented and is focused on the ways how knowledge accumulated within Lithuanian institutions of higher education could be channeled to the society.

TEMPUS effects on the institutional level

In Lithuania the line where the top-down approach should stop was marked out already in 1995 when the instructive subject-related priorities were replaced by the horizontal ones, focusing on the most important issues of the higher education reform.

Less instructive approach meant higher level of decentralization of the program. The following effects revealed by the TEMPUS method therefore could be indicated.

1. Dynamics of the program, which requested to build institutional strategies on the recently achieved goals, became a characteristic feature of development of higher education institutions. Institutional development plans, initially considered as a formal condition of participation, lately evolved to institutional strategies – internal motivating power of institutional reform.

2. Challenge to act as TEMPUS project contractor influenced on various services inside Lithuanian institutions of higher education, establishing new inter-office links.

3. Commonly agreed values of the pre-accession stipulated the teamwork of Lithuanian institutions of higher education, encouraging the evolutionary process *from competition to co-operation* when universities with different levels of experience still preferred to work together.

4. TEMPUS priorities of late years encouraged opening institutions of higher education to its environment and developed their and self-perception of being organizations.

5. Decentralization of the program promoted initiative, efficiency and professional competence. Active groups of individuals within institutions of higher education got the possibility to realize institutional aims and challenged the change within the university environment and (in some cases) outside it.

6. Increasing demands coming from Lithuanian institutions of higher education and based on the results achieved asked for new enhanced tasks which were reflected by the subsequent national priorities.

Future tasks for Lithuanian institutions of higher education

Enhanced quality of higher education by TEMPUS curricular activities and subsequent improvement of institutional management skills, local and international partnerships, ability to operate efficiently in local, regional and international environments, and self-perception of being organizations, have transformed Lithuanian institutions of higher education into active agents of integral socio-economic system. This evolutionary process can be understood as internal "institution building".

However, there is a need for more active influence of Lithuanian institutions of higher education upon socio-economic system, to participate actively in the "institution building" of the state.

Lithuanian institutions of higher education being depositors of commonly agreed values, truth and professional competence are willing and must play more active social role contributing to the development of the society which now is extremely important within the present pre-accession context. In that respect TEMPUS program should not second the "institution building" challenge only, but is ready to contribute to the development of political, economic and social powers of the state by means of channeling *acquis* from the European Union to Lithuania through already established international academic networks and adapting it to the local needs.

Nematerialūs TEMPUS efektai kaip Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų plėtros stimulai

Santrauka

Pranešime analizuojama strateginė ir taktinė Europos jungtinių TEMPUS projektų metodikos reikšmė, TEMPUS programos dinamika, jos įtaka aukštojo mokslo plėtotei ir pokyčiams instituciniame lygmenyje. Išvadose nurodomi svarbiausi informacijos vadybininkų rengimo programos rezultatai ir jų sąsaja su Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų artimiausios ateities uždaviniais, jungiantis į tarptautinius akademinius Europos sąjungos tinklus ir adaptuojant jų patirtį Lietuvos reikmėms.