



Lead2



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The LEAD2 first series of workshops

Beijing, 23-29 June 2019

Dissemination Report

The LEAD2 project is a Capacity Building in Higher Education project supported by the Erasmus+ programme. The LEAD2 project is built on the results of the LEAD project, but with several additional innovative contributions. This project is a partnership of 6 European partners and 6 Chinese partners focusing on university governance and academic leadership capacity building.

Co-organised by VUB and NAEA, the LEAD2 first series of workshops on University Governance and Academic Leadership in the context of innovation and internalisation successfully took place at National Academy of Education Administration (NAEA) in Beijing from 23-29 June 2019. About 70 participants attended the event, and they are from 38 different higher education institutions (HEIs), from both Europe and China, covering LEAD2 Project partner institutions, LEAD2 associated partners and other HEIs.

The opening ceremony was chaired by Dr. YU Jingtian, Vice President of NAEA. During the welcome session, Dr. HOU Huijun, Executive Vice President of NAEA, gave an opening speech on behalf of the NAEA. Former Vice-Rector of VUB, Prof. Dr. Jan Cornelis, also participated and warmly welcomed all participants on behalf of the VUB.

Various forms have been adopted during the training, including keynote speeches, structured discussions, site lectures, group discussions, quizzes, and reflections.

Keynote speeches played essential roles in the workshops of which the main objectives were to equip participants with basic and updated pieces of knowledge on University Governance and Academic Leadership. To that end, thirteen keynote speeches were presented during the five-day workshops, followed by interactive sessions (Q&A). Those presentations addressed the critical issues concerning university governance structures and academic leadership from international perspectives. Notably, several speeches from top-ranked universities, such as Tianjin University, Peking University, and Renmin University of China, provided participants practical examples for the themes on university rankings and governance structures in research universities. According to most of the participants, keynote speech sessions were informative as they increased understanding of the academic leaders on

university governance structures and academic leadership including how can universities enhance academic reputation, how can universities improve macro-management, and current trends toward internationalization in particular.

Consistent with keynote speeches, workshops and structured discussions were organised, aiming at improving knowledge, skills for academic leaders at different levels. Generally, these sessions created an opportunity for both Chinese academic leaders and European academic leaders to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and learn from each other. Several themes were discussed and interactively brainstormed among participants.

The first theme was about the LEAD2 MOOC effectiveness under which three questions were discussed: (1) How can the MOOC better serve academic leaders? (2) How can we widen or improve the content of the MOOC? (3) How are we able to cater to the needs of the academic leaders? What strategies should be followed up? The workshops were organised in an interactive way: the attendees discussed the issues at their group round tables, then the summaries and insights were shared at the plenary session. The participants who had experience with using the LEAD2 MOOC shared practical experience including experience with the online platform, the learning topics, and assignments. Several challenges along with suggestions were also presented and discussed by both experienced and non-experienced users. Practical knowledge of using the LEAD2 MOOC was not only useful for participants who actively joined the workshops but also important for potential LEAD2 MOOC users in order to use the platform effectively. Furthermore, this session was also beneficial for project organisers as it provided them with the users' experiential feedback toward the LEAD2 MOOC. Several suggestions and recommendations were noted for the improvement of the next LEAD2 MOOC edition which will be launched in September 2019.

The second theme focused on leadership skills of middle-level academic leaders. The structured discussion session on this topic was organised at NAEA on June 24th. The presentation on middle-level academic leader, provided by Prof. Yasar Kondakci, equipped participants with an overview of institutional academic leaders at middle level including their roles, characteristics and current challenges in management. Besides, the presentation on institutional governance: a perspective of academics, given by Prof. Wang Yan, provided a solid background of power distribution and governance in the two level governance of university and college, particularly in the Chinese context. These presentations were informative as it equipped attendees with basic theoretical knowledge of academic leadership at middle level. It was also a good start for attendees to join the discussion forum. Following the keynote speech, participants were gathered together in small groups to discuss the topic comprehensively. Several questions were presented and addressed within groups including who are the middle-level academic leaders in specific contexts, the roles of the dean and department head at specific settings, competencies needed by MLALs, the way to protect the academic rights, and the optimal path of the two-level governance for Chinese universities. The discussion was productive as it enabled participants to share their own perspectives on academic leadership at the middle levels, accompanied by practical examples in specific institutions. Furthermore, attendees had opportunities to enrich their practical understanding of academic leadership in different academic contexts. Impressively, commonalities and differences regarding academic leadership in the European and Chinese institutional settings were shared amongst partners which were considered as the significant and unique value

bridged by the LEAD2 project. Not surprisingly, a great number of the participants expressed high satisfaction with this session because of its usefulness and effectiveness.

In line with the session on June 24th, the workshops on middle-level academic leaders, moderated by Prof. Yang Po, was organised at Peking University on June 27th. Prof. Yang Po started the workshop by presenting a keynote speech on Department Head: Role, Competence and Inspiration. By focusing on the Department Head, who plays a key role in the academic governance structure, the keynote speech successfully deepened participants' understanding of academic leadership (at the department level). Moreover, attendees had a chance to discuss the roles, competences of Department Head in particular settings. Highlighted by participants, this session provided insights into academic leadership at the middle level both theoretically and practically. This is crucial as a majority of the participants were at this level of the management at their HEIs.

The third theme embraced university governance issue of which university governance structures in different contexts were emphasized. In order to tackle this topic, two structured workshop sessions were organised on June 26th and June 28th respectively.

The first structured workshop organised on June 26th, focused on three main questions including who academic leaders are, who they are doing report to, they account for what. Facilitated by Prof. Liu Yarong and Prof. Qu Xiaoxiao from NAEA, participants were formed in small groups discussing these issues. Notably, an insightful comparison between different university structured models were discussed. The meeting was productive as it brought practical knowledge regarding university governance system in both European and Chinese contexts. The session also strengthened engagement of participants and initially established a potential cooperation amongst partner universities in research.

The topic on university governance was flourishingly deepen by the structured workshop on June 28th. During the discussions, which was moderated by Prof Liu Yarong at NAEA, participants focused on competencies of academic leaders, accompanied by challenges and strategies to solve problems. Experience sharing was significantly an important medium of learning for academic leaders in this lecture. Through this activity, participants obtained more knowledge toward practices of academic leadership. As shared by the attendees, the structured workshops are practical and useful as it enables academic leaders to engage and apply what they have learnt in the workshops to tackle the current challenges they are facing within their institutions. The session additionally provided participants specific information to generate ideas for comparative research.

As reflected by all participants, the structured discussions during the five-day workshops have generally enhanced interpersonal and leadership competencies such as communication, management, and presentation skills. Moreover, the discussion results contributed by European and Chinese participants were highlighted as one of the most prominent achievements of the workshop.

Apart from main activities, quizzes and reflections were reported as very useful and productive as it offered opportunities for participants for testing their knowledge gained, for getting to know each other better as well as sharing what they have learnt.

Consortium meetings were organised on 24th and 26th June, for the LEAD2 partner universities. Prof. Chang Zhu welcomed all participants and presented the main aims of the meetings. The structure of research plans, accompanied by specific themes, were briefly presented to all participants. The meetings and discussions successfully provided participants an overview of what will follow up and also the plans for the upcoming activities. Additionally, these meetings were reported by project

members as productive as participants had chances to discuss the general research plan, get to know other partner institutions in a deeper manner. More importantly, research topics and research team members were identified during the meetings.

After the five days of activities, the participants completed the LEAD2 workshop training and 69 participants were awarded with the LEAD2 workshop certificates. The event was a significant step advancing the cooperation among HEIs from Europe and China. The workshops played an essential role in bringing together the experience, expertise, best practices of academic leaders with various leadership positions in different contexts.

The first series of workshops is part of the first series of blended training. Apart from the successful workshops training, 544 participants from 15 countries who participated in the English version of the LEAD2 MOOC, and 100 participants who participated in the Chinese version of the LEAD2 MOOC during Feb. to July 2019. The MOOC modules covered key topics including university governance structures, university governance for research, innovation and valorisation, academic leadership for education and internationalisation, comparative academic leadership, accompanied by interactive discussions, assignments and tests. After this edition of the LEAD2 blended training, the second edition of LEAD2 MOOC will be updated and revised. The second edition of the LEAD2 blended training will be launched from September 2019 to January 2020.



