Universidade do Minho

EUROPEAN STAFF MOBILITY PROGRAMME: AN EMPIRICAL EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNICATION DESIGN

4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON HIGHER EDUCATION MARKETING

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Lacerda, António[1]

[1] António Lacerda is a researcher, member of CIAUD (investigation research centre -Lisbon) and was granted an FCT scholarship for is research in Design since 2008. He is a Doctoral Design Student in FAUTL - Lisbon, and his investigation thesis is about Institutional Visual Identity Systems, and the study of the Graphic Signs. He has a post-graduation in Multimedia Technologies (Engineering Faculty - University of Porto) and in Design (Architecture Faculty - Technical University of Lisbon). Is graduated in Communication Design (ESAD- Matosinhos). He's a also a Graphic Designer and Communication Design Teacher at the University of Algarve - Portugal (3 years-graduation), and was the founder and Creative Director of Fuel-Design Studio in Porto - Portugal (2000-2005). He often participate in National and International Conferences, Seminars as also published some papers in the area of Design.
Project Coordinated by Professor Fernando Moreira da Silva – FAUTL.

Contacts

António Lacerda

Universidade do Algarve - ESE

Estrada da Penha - Campus da Penha

8005-139 Faro, Portugal

Tel.: 00351 289 800 100

Fax: 00351 289 888 403

Gab.44 - Ext. 6213

Web-sites

www.ualg.pt

www.ese.ualg.pt/design

www.antoniolacerda.com

blogue

www.identidade-visual.org

e-mails

alacerda@ualg.pt

mail@antoniolacerda.com

Title

European Staff Mobility Programme: An empirical experience in Communication Design

Keywords

Higher Education, Mobility Programmes, Visual and Corporate Identity, Communication Design.

ABSTRACT

The Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window Programme comprise the goals to operates in the field of higher education between the European Union and Third-countries through a mobility scheme addressing student and academic individual exchanges. In this paper we intend to explain and show our experience in the field of Design, concerning our staff mobility in November 2008 to Belarus State University in Minsk. This paper is divided in four chapters. The first chapter introduces the goals of this mobility regarding our research in Design in relation to the cultural, social and Design higher educations issues. The second chapter explains the different projects developed in the Belarus State University - Seminars, Workshops and illustrate the University, the Course of Design and the city of Minsk and the visits to the Belarus Designers Union.

The evolution of technology, economical changes and globalisation, launch the requirement of studying the needs of Higher Educations Systems and the way they communicate: to regard their Visual Identity as a resource which contributes to recognition and clarification of messages they produce to their internal and external audiences and society in general. That's one of the reasons why we decide to develop this mobility programme in order to make an empirical study of an International Higher Education Visual System. This study is explained in the third chapter. In the forth and last chapter we make our final conclusions about our thoughts and contributions for this kind of mobility in the improvement of Research in Design, enlargement of our knowledge of different educational systems and lastly the benefits in our Personal, Cultural and Social development.

1. THE ERASMUS MUNDUS EXTERNAL COOPERATION WINDOW PROGRAMME

1.1. The Mobility Goals

With the aim of cooperation and to motivate mobility in the area of Higher Education, implemented by executive Educational Agency for education of audiovisual and cultural, between the European Union and the third world countries with the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window Programme (EMECWP), we made a proposal - "call for proposals for mobility flows" - Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows Lot 6 (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine), as Staff Mobility.

After the necessary procedures we were accepted in our initiative in Belarus State University, Minsk.

1.2. Specific Data

Kind of Mobility: Staff Mobility

Lecture: António Lacerda - Algarve University - ESEC

Local of Mobility: Belarus State University

Country and Town: Belarus - Minsk

Date of mobility: 05 of November at 05 of December - 2008

Field of Study: Communication Design

1.3. Specific Goals

The determining factors, which led us to participate in this mobility, were:

- The contribution to research for our Phd in Design and support our research hypotheses;
- To be in touch with other Higher Educational Systems, namely how they communicate visually with their audience;
- Specifically speaking regarding their Visual Identities and their Graphic Signs (Symbols, Logotypes, Colours and Typography);
- To be in touch with other educational systems in the field of

communication design, methodologies which contribute to my professional development as a lecturer;

- Simultaneous worldwide projection of not only my country but also our communication Design Course in the Algarve University where we are based in;

- Lastly the exchange of knowledge in new cultural, social and educational fields.

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2. PROPOSED PROJECTS

The plan of this project and the work we pretend to do in this Staff Mobility was divided in three stages.

2.1. Seminars

In the first stage we decided to make a seminar with a presentation of the University of Algarve, showing it's significant growth in terms of its student population and modern facilities, the faculties, schools and the offering in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and show a resume and evolution of our personal curriculum in the area of Design. Subsequent to this we started to explain the different Curricular Units at our University in the new Bologna System, within the distinct works of our students in the areas of Visual Identity, Animation, Illustration, Drawing, Multimedia, installations and different equipments and our external activities. We also explained the foundation of our course and the different kinds of national and European mobility programs. Additionally we contextualize geographic, cultural and social our country. At this Seminar different Directors and teachers of the BSU – Course of Design, were present during three hours (Picture 1 and 2).

Picture 1 - First Seminar in the Belarus State University

Picture 2 – Slideshow for the presentation of Algarve University

The second stage was developed in another day and was based in another seminar with the thematic of Corporate Identity and Branding vocation to the Belarus State University Students.
After the development of these two seminars we decide to make a workshop about the theme "Branding the Nation". We start to talk about some theory issues about the history of Brands, showing some developed works in the fields of brands and Nation Brands. Subsequent to this first presentation, we present a matrix to help students to make the development of their Nation Brand (Picture 2 and 3)

Picture 2 - Presentation of the history of brands

Picture 3 - Second Seminar in the Belarus State University

2.2. Workshop

The third and the final stage of this mobility was developed through a workshop called "Brand the Nation"

The purpose of this workshop was for students to understand the concepts and the power of branding, and to learn how graphic design can improve the understanding of the Corporate Identity Systems complexity.

Students where encouraged to research and make the branding of their Country, and the visual system for each region. To do this, they develop the main symbol and logotype, and then the corporate identity system applied in a different communication products. The goal of this work was to promote the image of Byelorussia abroad.
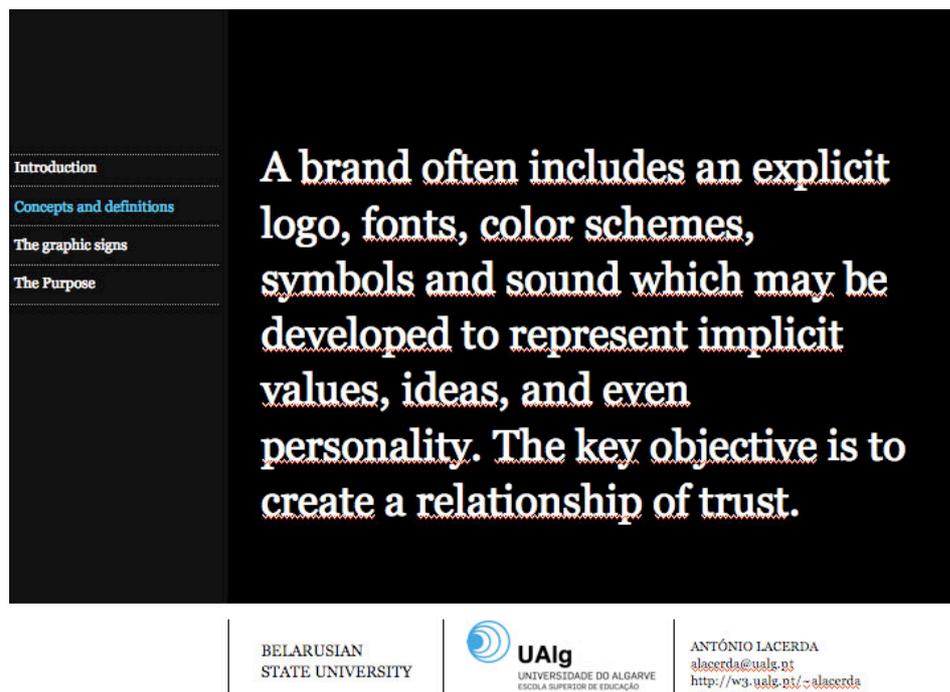
2.2.1. Workshop Assignments

The students were organized in groups of 2/3 students and began to research the culture, the economics and the offers in terms of services or products of the Belarus. After that they compiled the most of images and texts they could, and then they discussed with classmates what kind of stuff would be traduced in visual things. When they finish this we use a metaphoric matrix and identify the five attributes more important for the brand they want to create (Examples: Velocity, attention, love, community, power, etc.) Then

they identify by words the stuffs they chose to be traduced in visual things (buildings, trees, nature, animals, people, etc.).

In the matrix, they put the attributes of the brand in the left, and put the words you chose, above and began to draw some sketches. This sketches (figurative, abstract, typographic, iconic, singular, etc.; were the interface between the attributes and the words traduced in visual things. The final steps where to chose the final image to the brand and then develop research of colours, typography and final shapes. For last they prepare and presented the final work in the final class.
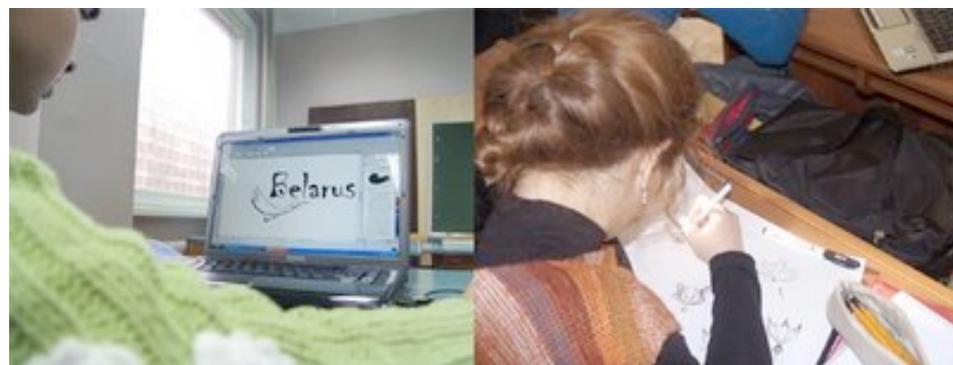
This workshop was accomplished in 6 hours a week and was developed between 11 and 25 November (Pictures 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Picture 4 - Image of the slideshow and introduction of the workshop

Portugal

BELARUSIAN
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UAlg
UNIVERSIDADE DO ALGARVE
ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE EDUCAÇÃO

ANTÓNIO LACERDA
alacerda@ualg.pt
http://w3.ualg.pt/~alacerda

Picture 5 - Image of the slideshow and introduction of the workshop

Picture 6 - Images of the workshop
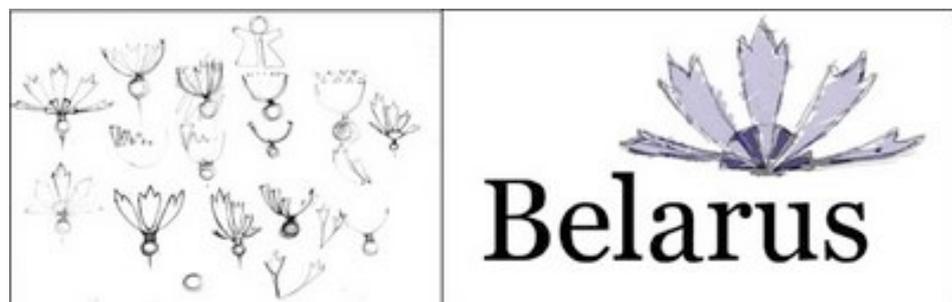
Picture 7 - Some brands developed in the workshop

2.3. University and the Course of Design in BSU

We made different kinds and specific presentations, and share different methodologies in the field of Design with the staff of the course of Design at BSU. The course of Design in BSU is divided in five years and they aren't in the Bologna System. They have a Higher Education System based in the school of ULM[2]. They explain us the different curricular Units, theory and practical projects developed by their students. We also saw the different structures of the diverse buildings and departments at BSU (Pictures 8, 9, 10 and 11).

Picture 8 - Main building of the Belarus State University and the Faculty were was the Course of Design

Picture 9 - Work meetings at the Belarus State University

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[2] "The Ulm School of Design (HfG Ulm) existed for 15 years in Germany from 1953 to 1968.. It was founded by Inge Aicher-Scholl, Otl Aicher and Max Bill, who was a student at the Bauhaus. HfG Ulm is considered to be the most influential design school in the world after the Bauhaus.[2][3] The school is notable for its inclusion of semiotics as a field of study. Although the school closed in 1968, the 'Ulm Model' concept continues to influence international design education." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulm_School_of_Design

Picture 10 - Installations of the Design Course

Picture 11 - Installations and projects of the Course of Design

2.4. Belarus and the City of Minsk

Belarus is a country in Eastern Europe, bordered by Russia, Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania. Our knowledge's of this country and the City of Minsk, its capital, and the evolution of Design, were firstly made by Internet and a few books that we set up, but the access at this information's was in a small number. Many websites were in Russian and we only reach the real image from Minsk when we arrive. In our experience, Minsk reflects a nation that was devastated during the Second World War but rebuild with typical Post-Soviet Architecture and some high tech buildings such the Belarusian national Library (Pictures 12 and 13). Minsk is a secure Town but citizens have many difficulties to get visas to visit other countries besides Russia and Ukraine.
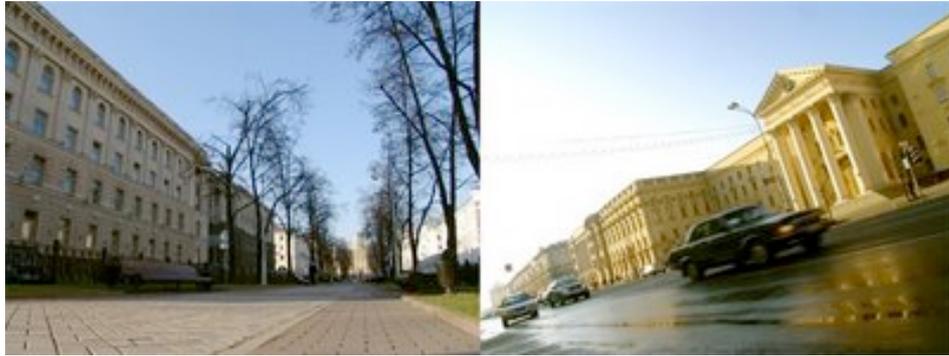
Picture 12 - Streets and buildings in Minsk

Picture 13 - Museum of the Second World War and the National Circus

2.5. Belarus Designers Union

After the different seminars and meetings at the University, we meet the vice-president of the Belarus Designers Union (one of the professors in the Course of Design in BSU). Subsequent to that, we organize an encounter in the installation of this association located in the centre of Minsk (Picture 14). In this meeting we keep with a real view from the Graphic Design works that have been developed by the Belarus Designers Union and from important designers such as Vladimir Tsesler[3] and Sergei Voichenko[4] (Pictures 15 and 16)

[3] Born in 1951 in the city of Slutsk (Belarus), Vladimir Tsesler studied at the Academy of Arts, the Department of Design. It's one of the most important designers in Belarus , with many works awarded in the sphere of advertising and branding, He develop with Sergei Voichenko a ArtDesign Studio "Tsesler&Voichenko" in Minsk - Belarus
[4] Born in 1955 in the city of Mariupol (Ukraine) e also studied at the Academy of Arts, the Department of Design were he meets is co-author Vladimir Tsesler. He started to paint posters and start to take part in a different international poster's biennales. He dies in Minsk on December 9, 2004.

Picture 14 - Headquarter of the Belarus Designers Union

Picture 15 - Works from the "Tsesler&Voichenko" ArtDesign Studio

Picture 16 - Works from the "Tsesler&Voichenko" ArtDesign Studio

3. INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION MOBILITY PROGRAMME: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1. Competencies and Values of Higher Education

Words and images are tools that bond humans: they give us support to the relations between physical, intellectual and the social world. In this way the study the way Higher Education Systems communicate visually with their internal and external audiences can give us some experiences and comprehensive issues in the world of branding. But why we think that this Universe is so important? What are the real competences of these Institutions? Higher Education Systems organize and ministry courses and prepare students for professional real life, so they contribute actively to the achievement of the citizens, cultural and social evolution of societies, regions and countries. They also promote scientific and research, transferring knowledge, technologic and scientific issues. They promote mobility programs with other Higher Education Systems (Staff Mobility, Researchers and Students), collaborate with Public and private Institutions from the regional, national and international development and contribute for the international cooperation and proximity between the countries. That's why we think the importance of these Institutions in modernization of social welfare.

3.2. The New Higher Education Systems

"The Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Council, Lisbon, March 2000).

In nowadays, we think to achieve these goals, we have to modernization social welfare and Education and training Systems. For this process of changing, its important the cooperation

between member States, sharing experiences and researches, working towards common goals and learning. That's why we assume the importance of Higher Education Mobility Programmes. But to achieve all these goals, these systems also have to improve on all fronts and we can't forget the importance of Design in these rolls. We can see that in these matter we have many work to do in terms to Design. Implement and manage better Visual Identities Systems is one of the imperative tasks. These Institutions have the responsibility to make the visual information more clearness and accessible to all (internal and external audiences), designing efficiently the entire graphic signs that compound these complex systems.

3.3. Belarus State University - An Empirical study

As we already saw in other National and International Higher Education Institutions, the Visual Identity of Belarus State University has also many problems (different family brands for each faculties and schools, different typographies, system colours and brands architecture, fragile and incoherent shapes that reflects a fragment image. We also detected the inexistence of a rational and articulated identification in the buildings.
To do this work, we recollect all the brands and some communication and promotional products used by the different faculties and Schools. The main symbol of the Belarus State University is based in a heraldic shape without any historical or brand value. There is no management or corporate guidelines. The Brand visibility and Corporate Image don't embrace the Corporate Identity of this organization. According to Ollins (2008), "the primer identifier for almost brands is the symbol or logo. The other tangible elements - colours, typefaces (...) are also very important, and collectively form the visible recognition pattern".

We also made some interviews to Liudmila Katsko (Deputy Department Chief of Foreign Relations Office) in the way to understand why Belarus State University doesn't have an effective and coherent set of visual elements and each division (Departments, Faculties, Schools, etc.) don't look at the visual elements as a whole (Pictures 17 and 18).

Picture 17 - Main Symbol and some communication products of Belarus State University

Picture 18 – Brands from each Faculties and Schools of Belarus State University

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

First of all we would like to be acknowledge for all the support in the appliance for this mobility, and all the guiding in my stay in Belarus - Minsk.

Dr. Maria López and Dra. Enara Moreno from the University of Deusto, Spain, Dr. Marleni Azevedo, in charge of the Erasmus Mundus and External Cooperation Window from University of Algarve, and Liudmila Katsko, Chief of the Department of Foreign Relations Office from Belarus State University and to all the teachers and students from the Course of Design at BSU in the conduct of all the information's in the city of Minsk and sharing all the knowledge's in the area of Design.

The University of Algarve is also keen on expanding its network of international relations since academic networks, because this issue constitutes an integral part of the University's overall strategic plan. In that way the coordinate for the International Partnerships of the University of Algarve is trying to make a cooperation agreement between the two Universities, to join the Belarus State University in activities that comprise student exchanges as well as co-operation and the exchange of knowledge in fields of interest.

The work developed in the workshop was very satisfactory, as well as the change of different knowledge's in the field of design. In terms of our research in Design, this mobility was very rewarding because we saw similar problems in the way these Institutions make their management of Design. The brand as a corporate resource is not effectively introduced and sustained. Like finance, marketing or information technology, Design has to operate just as effectively has other corporate resources and these Institutions have to take Corporate Identity more seriously. These Institutions leads with many issues (people, buildings, internal and external relations, objects, products, etc.) and if brand management isn't consistent or coherent, we can visualize lots of contradictions that

are harder to handle.

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