

Designing Effective Leadership Programmes in Higher Education: LEADALKO Case Study

Nada Trunk Širca

University of Primorska, International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
trunk.nada@gmail.com

Merita Shala

University “Isa Boletini” Mitrovice, Kosovo
merita.shala@umib.net

Kriselda Gura

University College Bedër (BEDER), Albania
kgura@beder.edu.al

Abstract

In higher education, effective leadership is becoming more widely acknowledged as a key component of institutional resilience and change. Empirical findings from Erasmus+ leadership development programs, such as MHELM (Moldova), MORHEL (Morocco), and iHiLead (Indonesia), emphasise the importance of practice-oriented, context-sensitive, and participative program design. These programs, which are based on the HELQS (Higher Education Leadership Qualities and Skills) framework, offer organised models for enhancing leadership abilities in three areas: operational and strategic leadership, individual efficacy, and adaptability to modern issues like internationalisation, innovation, and inclusivity.

Through a staged structure that combines project-based learning, mentoring, and training, iHiLead focusses on action learning and institutional transformation. MHELM helps university leaders in Moldova develop their strategic, managerial, and innovative skills, especially when it comes to autonomy and socioeconomic integration. MORHEL encourages participative and flexible leadership development that is suited to the demands of the local higher education market. A dedication to contemplative, theory-informed, and interactive education that cultivates leadership identity and impact unites all three programs.

The LEADALKO project expands upon existing frameworks by offering higher education institutions in Albania and Kosovo a structured Leadership Development Program. LEADALKO, which is still in its early stages of development, is governed by the HELQS framework and informed by a thorough training needs analysis. A 360-degree feedback

tool for peer and self-evaluation, along with individualised coaching based on the GROW concept, is part of its design. Strategic leadership, governance, resource management, stakeholder engagement, and institutional change are among the major areas of concentration for the program. The project establishes the foundation for a scalable and contextually relevant leadership development model that aligns with institutional and national reform agendas, even though results are still pending.

When taken as a whole, these examples highlight the importance of flexible, evidence-based leadership development strategies that address local demands and global standards in higher education.

Acknowledgement: *This contribution has been prepared in the frame of Erasmus+ project Leadership Capacities Development in Higher Education across Albania and Kosovo (LEADALKO), project number: 01179476-ERASMUS-EDU-2024-CBHE-STRAND-1*

Keywords: Leadership in higher education, Erasmus+ project LEADALKO, HELQS framework