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LALA: Building Capacity to Use Learning Analytics to Improve Higher Education in Latin America

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Conflict Resolution Protocol

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Introduction

This document aims at defining the different types of conflicts that can emerge during the LALA project and establishing an action plan to react depending on the different types of conflicts. This way, the correspondent mechanisms can be enabled as a result of a conflict.

The LALA project proposal tries to minimize the risks. The minimization of risks is achieved in different ways:

- There are not complex dependencies among tasks. For example, the adaptation of dashboards and dropout tools (WP3) is influenced by the definition of the LALA framework (WP2). But the adaptation of these tools can start even if the LALA framework is not completely defined.
- There are previous research experiences and collaborations among many different partners of the consortium, which achieved successful results.
- The consortium is composed by experts in learning analytics who are used to carry out similar tasks to the ones defined in the LALA project.

However, some risks can come up during the project and a proper conflict resolution protocol should be defined to act in case these risks appear.

1.- Types of Conflicts

Four different types of possible conflicts that might be present in the LALA project are identified:

- **Project description document conflicts.** These are discrepancies about the project description document approved by the European Commission or about the approved budget for each budget ítem by the European Commission. These conflicts involve any possible changes in the project description documento or the associated budget as the

proposal was approved by the European Commission. These types of discrepancies include e.g. the change of the activities to carry out in a WP, interchange of budget among different budget items (e.g. between diets and travels).

- **Responsability conflicts.** Discrepancies in the responsibility for executing a specific task in the project, e.g. a task of a Work Package. This is a conflict about which partner should complete a specific task in the project when it is not clear in the project description document. In case it is clear the responsible institution for executing a specific task according to the project proposal, then the conflict is of the previous type.
- **Way of execution conflicts.** Discrepancies about the way how a task should be completed when the way of completing it is not specified in the project description document. This type of discrepancy is not a discrepancy about if a task should be done or not or which partner should execute a specific task. In case there is a discrepancy that implies that a task should be done or not or a different way of making the task according to the project description document, then this will be considered as a conflict of the first type since it would require a change according to the project proposal document. But the way of execution conflicts covers discrepancies on how to execute a task when it is not explicitly said how the task should be done in the project document proposal. This does not apply only to technical tasks, but to all the other tasks such as management or dissemination.
- **Quality control conflicts.** This is a conflict that arises when a specific project task is not done with enough quality at the deadline. The detection of poor quality execution can be done by the internal evaluation (by the Steering Committee) or by the external evaluation (with external experts).

2.- Protocol for project description document conflicts

Project description document conflicts imply major changes of the project. The project description document requires a discrepancy with the project proposal document approved by the European Commission or the approved budget by the European Commission. In case of this type of conflict, the protocol establishes a two step process:

- 1) The conflict will be analyzed by the Steering Committee of the LALA project. The Steering Committee is chaired by the project coordinator and composed of one delegate from each partner. In case one member of the Steering Committee cannot be present in a meeting, he/she can delegate his/her presence and vote in another colleague from his/her institution. The different options to solve the conflict will be presented and analyzed. Each delegate (i.e. each partner) will have one vote. There are at least six meetings of the Steering Committee per year. A meeting can be done physically or virtually. The proposed solutions to the conflict will be voted. Decisions must be taken by unanimity (i.e. as there are seven partners, it is required the approval of all seven partners for accepting a decision of this type of conflict).

- 2) Once the decision has been taken, as it implies a change in the work plan or the budget distribution among items, etc., then the proposal will be communicated to the European Commission following the required formal specifications and according to the corresponding rules of the working program. If the European Commission accepts the change, then the decision will be implemented. In case the European Commission does not accept the change, then the decision from step 1 will not be implemented, and the project will be deployed and executed without any change according to the approved budget and the project document description by the European Union.

3.- Protocol for responsibility conflicts

Responsibility conflicts arise when there is a discrepancy about which partner should carry out a certain task when it is not clearly defined in the project description document the partner that will execute this task.

The protocol for this type of responsibility conflict is composed by two steps:

- 1) The partners that participate in the work package, where there is the discrepancy about the task that belongs to the work package, will try to agree on the partner that will carry out the task. The partner that will carry out the task should agree on executing the task and if this is the case, the task will be assigned to that partner. In case there is no agreement or the assigned partner does not want to take the responsibility for the task, then step 2 will be applied.
- 2) The task will be assigned to the work package leader. This is done in case of no agreement in the previous step 1. There is only one partner leader for each work package, although there are also other support partners that collaborate in the work package.

4.- Protocol for Way of Execution Conflicts

Way of execution conflicts make reference to conflicts about how a task should be done, when this is not specified in the project proposal description document. The solving process for this type of conflict involves two steps:

- 1) The partners working in the work package will analyze and discuss the different ways of execution of the task. A decision will be taken when there is a majority of 75% of the partners working in the work package.
- 2) If there is not an agreement on the previous step 1, the Steering Committee of the LALA project will take a decision with a majority of 50% about the way of executing this task.

5.- Protocol for Quality Control Conflicts

Quality control conflicts arise when a specific task is not done in due time with a good quality level or when the task has a good quality level but can be improved. The detection that the task is done in due time with a good quality level can be done by two different ways:

- Internal evaluation: This is detected by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will meet at least six times each year either physically or virtually. The Steering committee will be in charge of reviewing the different tasks of the project.
- External evaluation: This is detected by the external evaluators, which will make an evaluation of different aspects of the projects every year.

Once a quality problem has been detected, the partners involved in these tasks should solve it as soon as possible according to the recommendations of the Steering Committee.

6.- Conflict resolution worksheets

For any conflict, a worksheet about conflict resolution must be filled in. The model of the timesheet is the following:

Worksheet for each conflict in the LALA project

1. Identify the participants in the conflict and what you hope to achieve.

Participants involved in the conflict	Partner name 1: Partner name 2: ... Partner name n:	
Type of Conflict	Among the established four types of this conflict resolution document	
Description of the Conflict		
Expected outcome		
Common Ground		
2. Brainstorm and list the options available to resolve the conflict		
Options for Resolution:	Description	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
3. Selected alternative and process		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description of the selected alternative among the different options. - Process to select a specific alternative, including the different steps according to this document. - Number of votes if this is the case. 		