

ERACON 2018

ERASMUS CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION 2018

8-12 May 2018
MURCIA, SPAIN

Proceedings

Editors

Gr. Makrides, Y. Kalaitzis

Published by

European Association



Erasmus Coordinators

ISBN 978-9963-713-28-8



ERACON 2018

Organizer

European Association of ERASMUS Coordinators (EAEC)
36 Stasinou street, Office 104, Strovolos 2003, Nicosia, Cyprus
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PRESENTATIONS

ERASMUS/ERASMUS+ STUDENT MOBILITY IN TIMES OF THE EUROPEAN CRISIS. THE SITUATION OF INTERNATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING STUDENTS IN VIENNA / AUSTRIA FROM 2013 - 2017

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ABSTRACT

In the last few decades it has become more and more important for students to gain experience in another country, and international student mobility has constantly increased. This study focuses on Erasmus/Erasmus+ student mobility in times of the European economic and social crisis. Based on previous research, a quantitative questionnaire concerning Erasmus/Erasmus+ student mobility has been designed with a special emphasis on the current European crisis. The main research focus is on the influence of the European crisis on student mobility - especially on students in teacher training/education who are a highly underrepresented group within the context of Erasmus/Erasmus+ (vgl. Bauer & Kreuz, 2016; 2015; Cairns, 2014; Ross, 2014). Incoming Erasmus/Erasmus+ teacher training students at the University College of Teacher Education in Vienna (N=202) were asked during the academic years 2013-2017 about their motivations, expectations, experiences and the difficulties concerning being an international student in times of growing uncertainty and about their Europeanness. Changes from 2013, the peak of the economic crisis, until 2017 were detected. Outcomes of the study provide indications that the general European situation affects the life of European teacher training students. Over the years variations concerning students' European identity, their identification as a European citizen, as well as the personal perception of the economic or social crisis can be identified.

1 Introduction

From 1987 until now, almost 9 million people took part in the Erasmus programme. Unfortunately, during the European economic crisis (2009-2017) many EU countries had to reduce their national budgets concerning the education sector and the co-financing of mobility grants. Consequently Erasmus/Erasmus+ funding became the only reliable factor for international mobility and internationalisation measurements. "The focus on employability in the Erasmus+ programme is strong, as one of its main objectives is to improve the level of competencies and skills, with particular regard to their relevance to the labour market" (European Commission (2014b, p. 64). So, the current Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) focuses on increasing international cooperation between HEIs and business and aims to build a bridge from the academic integration into the labour market.

For the next Erasmus period (2021-2027) the European Commission will double the funding and would enable then 12 million people to gain international knowledge, experiences and

competences in a Europe without national borders (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-erasmusplus_en.pdf).

"We must strengthen Erasmus. For over 30 years it has been one of the most important programmes because it shows everyone what integration is all about. It is the very essence of a borderless Europe. Through Erasmus we give our young people more opportunities. This is why we are proposing to double our funding. Every euro that we invest in Erasmus is an investment in our future – in the future of a young person, teacher or trainee and in the future of Europe. As a former Erasmus student, I speak from my own experience." so Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-President of the Commission for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, 2018; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3948_en.htm).

Determinants as students' motivations, expectations, experiences and difficulties concerning being an international student in times of growing uncertainty and their Europeanness were during the time of the European crisis an interesting field of research. The Nationale Agentur für EU-Hochschulzusammenarbeit im DAAD describes that 83% of the Erasmus participants feel strongly connected with Europe (NA DAAD, 2017).

Indeed, teacher training/education students are a highly underrepresented group within the context of Erasmus students. Ballowitz et al. (2015) argue that teachers are usually "bound to work in the country" where they studied because of the heterogeneity of educational systems across countries (p. 3).

The European Commission describes teachers and teacher trainers as essential factors in educating the next generation. That is why 'Education and Training 2020', Europe's strategy in the field of education and training, puts a special emphasis on the role of teachers – from their selection, initial education and continuous professional development to their career opportunities. International mobility of teachers gives pedagogues an insight into different educational systems and methods as well as a unique opportunity to exchange with European colleagues (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015, p. 85).

Meanwhile teachers in Austria do not have the security to get a job in their own country. The Erasmus Impact study came to the result, that more than 85% of the Erasmus students go abroad to have better job-opportunities at the international labour market (European Commission, 2014b). Mobile students have in the first year after their graduation a 50 percent higher probability to find a job as non-mobile students (NA DAAD, 2017).

2 Research Questions

This study focuses on Erasmus/Erasmus+ student mobility in times of the European economic and social crisis. The main research focus is on the influence of the European crisis on student mobility - especially on students in teacher training/education (see Bauer & Kreuz, 2016; 2015; Cairns, 2014; Ross, 2014).

Changes from 2013, the peak of the economic crisis, until 2017 were analysed.

Are there any changes from 2013 – 2017 concerning the following questions:

- What are the main motives to go abroad for an Erasmus+ semester?
- Were the expectations concerning the Erasmus+ semester met?
- How do students evaluate their Erasmus stay?
- What can be said about the group of teacher training students regarding European identity and identification as European citizen?
- Is there an impact of the economic crisis on Erasmus+ students?

3 Methodology and design

Based on previous research in developing, revising and analysing a qualitative questionnaire (Bauer & Kreuz 2010; 2012; 2013), a quantitative survey for teacher training students concerning their perceptions and experiences during the Erasmus period in another country was designed including a part of questions with a special focus on the European crisis. This questionnaire was created in German and English so that international students could choose which language suited them better. After a pilot study the questionnaire was modified into formal, content and language criteria (Bauer & Kreuz 2013). The evaluation of the data is based on SPSS Statistics.

3.1 Sample characteristics

All participants were incoming Erasmus/Erasmus+ students from the university college of teacher education in Vienna (PH Wien) during the academic years 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. The sample consists of 202 students, 85% female and 15% male students, from 24 different nations. Data of students with missing answers have been excluded.

The students' age is listed in the following table. There were 21,9% "respondents up to 20 years", 69.2% between the age of 21 and 25 years and 9% were "26 years and older".

Table 1: Age-structure

| | | number | percent |
|-------|-------------|--------|---------|
| Age | 18-20 | 44 | 21,9 |
| | 21-25 | 139 | 69,2 |
| | 26 or older | 18 | 9,0 |
| Total | | 201 | 100,0 |

The majority of teacher training student participants were predominantly undergraduate degree students (82,3%). Around 17,7% were master's degree students.

4 Results

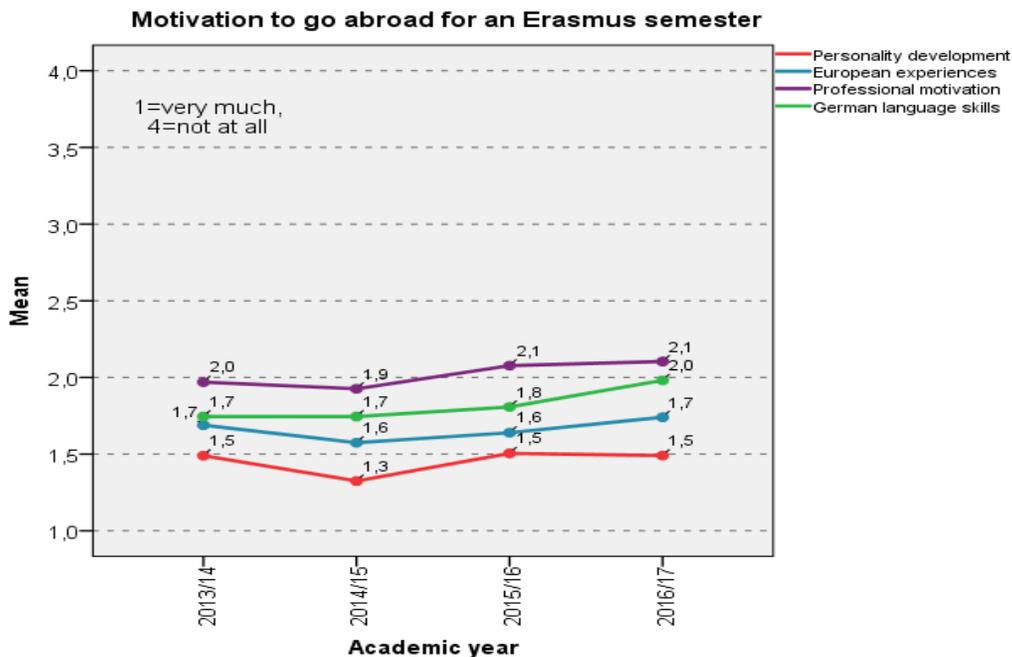
Here the major findings of the questionnaire are summarised. The question about the motivation / intention to go abroad for an Erasmus semester resulted after a factor analysis with the 12 items of this question in 4 factors: "Personality development", "European experiences", "Professional

motivation” and “German language skills”. Results show that over the 4 academic years all four factors remained equally important. All 4 factors show a substantial importance for the students (see Figure 1).

Most important is “Personality development”, followed by “European experiences”. “Professional motivation” is less important than the other factors showing a tendency to decrease over the academic years. From 2015/16 on all motivations loose importance but are still necessary (no significant result [$p>0,05$]. Kruskal W).

This means that European changes and changes from Erasmus to Erasmus+ did not affect the motivations to go for an Erasmus semester over the years.

Figure 1:

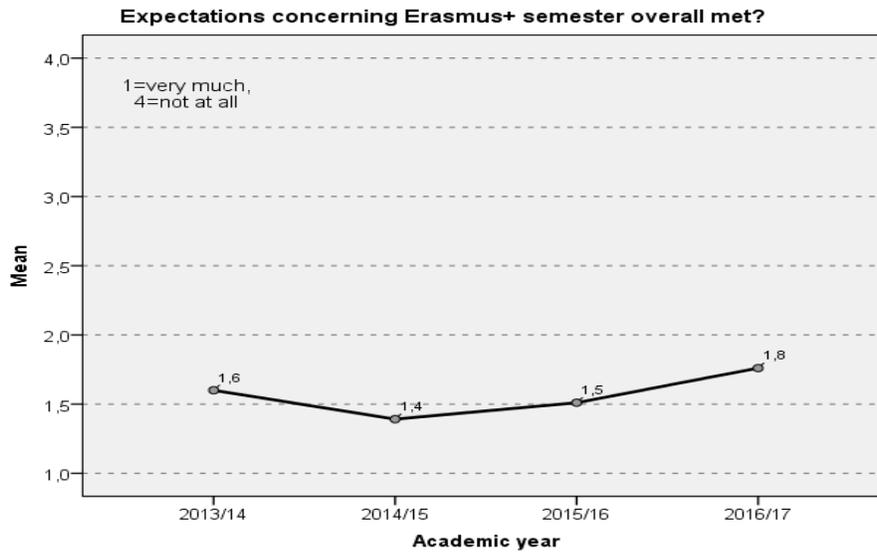


When asked why students specifically did choose our country Austria/ city Vienna to go for an Erasmus/Erasmus+ semester abroad, results describe over the 4 academic years that the factor “cultural aspects” is more important than the factor “professional and educational aspects”. There were no significant changes between the academic years; $p> 0,05$).

Expectations concerning the Erasmus / Erasmus+ semester resulted after a factor analysis of the 11 items of this question in 4 factors: “Personality development”, “European experiences”, “Study-related aspects” and “German language skills”.

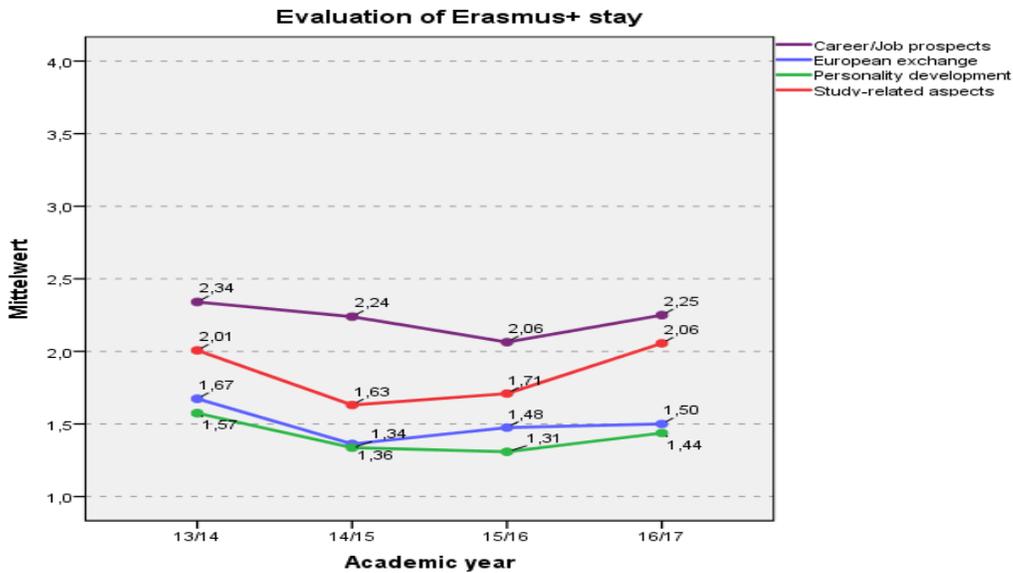
Personality development and European experiences were met at best with a significant result concerning European experiences between the academic years 13/14 to 14/15. Study-related aspects improve from 13/14 to 14/15. Language learning expectations are at least met. Overall expectations of the Erasmus+ stay are fulfilled from very good to good, at best in the academic year 2014/15 as Figure 2 shows.

Figure 2:



Referring the Evaluation of the Erasmus+ stay, the overall satisfaction with the Erasmus/Erasmus+ stay was over the 4 academic years evaluated with very good. A factor analysis of the 10 items of this question resulted in 4 factors: “Personality development”, “European exchange”, “Study-related aspects” and “Career/Job prospects”.

Figure 3:



In detail the satisfaction with “European exchange” and “Personality development” is better than with “Study-related aspects” and “Career/Job prospects”.

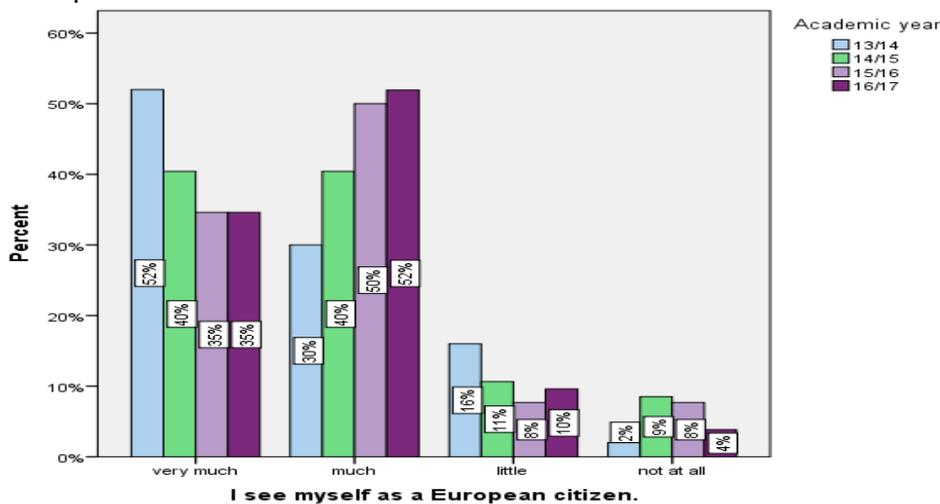
In all of the four academic years, more than half of the students wanted to stay longer.

The top reasons for staying longer were because of the beauties of the city and its cultural heritage, to gain more experiences, improve the language skills and having better study conditions than at the home university. Reasons mentioned for not staying another semester were that predominantly students had to finish their studies at home and they had a great desire for their home. In 2014/15, especially limited financial resources were mentioned and in 2015/16 also the courses offered were not compatible to their studies.

When asked what the social construction “European Identity” means to students, the outcomes show that over the researched time period from 2013-2017 the identity with Europe is positively associated with the following three answers: “All human beings are equal before the law” (93%), “The diversity of the European countries is an enrichment for personality development” (91,5%) and “Decline in prejudices towards other European countries through personal contacts” (90.9%).

The majority of the current Erasmus+ teacher training generation studying in Austria thinks positively about being a European citizen although over the academic years there is a shift from feeling “very much” as a European Citizen to “a bit”: while 2013/14 52% and 2014/15 40% of the students were feeling themselves “very much” as a European Citizen, in the years 2015/16 and 2016/17 were these only 35%. In contrast in the academic years 2015/16 and 2016/17 there is an increase from 30% up to around 52% feeling “a bit” as a European Citizen (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: European Citizen



The participation in the Erasmus+ programme has changed students’ identity as “European Citizen” in a positive way. The strongest agreement was found in the academic year 2014/15 (36%), also the years 2015/16 (54%) and 2016/17 (60%) still showed a strong agreement. Determining reasons were: “exchange with people from different parts of Europe; “we are a big family“ and “a lot of new information about other European cultures“.

Further results illustrate, that the impact of the crisis on students’ countries concerning their studies and private life got less over time. Also, for the researched time-period the fear of the economic crisis, which was over 50% in 2013/14 is by trend decreasing. Students were not any longer afraid of the crisis and their negative effects. But the economic crisis was still influencing students in their intention to go for an Erasmus semester. In 2013/14 this crisis influenced more

than 50% of the students in their intention to go for Erasmus. In 2016/17 still around 43% of the students agreed with this question and let them still take a look on job opportunities abroad in more than 50%.

5 Conclusions

The aim of the study was to analyse the effects of the economic crisis on student mobility over a special period, especially on the group of the future teachers staying in Austria for an Erasmus+ semester. Results show that European changes did not affect the motivations to go for an Erasmus semester during the crisis. Personality development and European experiences are found out to be stable determinants for the motivations, expectations and evaluation of the Erasmus+ stay. Also, the identity with Europe is positively associated over the researched period and the participation in the Erasmus+ programme has positive effects on students' identities as a European citizen. Most of the Erasmus+ students are still feeling as a European citizen although during the crisis there is a shift from feeling very much to a bit recognisable.

As the economic crisis has turned now into a political or social one, this leads to some future questions as how will the feeling of belonging to Europe change for Erasmus+ students? How far will the current national and separatistic tendencies influence Erasmus+ students in their Europeanness?

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EUNIVERSITY: THE IDEA OF ERASMUS+ NETWORK ITS BENEFITS FOR EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES AND POSSIBLE IMPACT ON INTERNALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Across Europe many students participate in European Erasmus+ mobility for studies. However, students are faced with a challenge of finding the necessary information about the host universities, suitable courses, forms and accommodation possibilities. A solution by creating an online community for European higher education institutions that carry out the Erasmus+ Programme information is proposed. To elaborate, each university that carries out the Erasmus + program would have an online profile containing all the information that Erasmus students need. To find appropriateness of the idea a survey was conducted on 270 students who were recently, or are currently, taking part in the Erasmus+ Programme mobility for studies. The survey has shown that the majority of the students agree strongly with the idea of the proposed online community, which would provide all the essential information in one place, thus creating a favourable environment for internationalization.

Key words: higher education, internationalization, online community, Erasmus+, social cohesion, networks

1. Introduction

Internationalization of higher education generally represents the intentional, systematic process of aligning core institutional purposes with international objectives and activities. (Heuser, Martindale, Lazo, 2015). Freedom of movement between EU member states, for instance for purposes of work or study, is enshrined as a fundamental citizen's right in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and since 1999, a main aim of the Bologna Process has been to improve actual opportunities for mobility for educational purposes in order to promote transnational European higher education in the contiguous European Higher Education Area (Fabricius A., Haberland H., Mortensen J., 2016). In last three decades, the European Commission has been placing much emphasis on internationalization of European higher education institutions (Asderaki F., 2012).

On a European plane, boosting intra-European student mobility is part of a wider project of creating a shared sense of membership across European, especially EU, countries (King R., Raghuram P., 2013). The international dimension and the position of higher education in the global arena are given greater emphasis in international, national and institutional documents and mission statements than ever before (De Wit, 2010). The future of higher education is a global one, therefore, this process needs people who understand and define their role within a global community, transcending the national borders, and embracing the concepts of sustainability -

equity of rights and access, advancement of education and research, and much more (Brandenburg, De Wit, 2011). One of the main goals of internationalized higher education is to provide education to students who will be the citizens, entrepreneurs and scientists of tomorrow (Hénard, Diamond & Roseveare, 2012). Internationalization is not an end in itself, it is a driver for change and improvement – it should help generate the skills required in the 21st century, spur on innovation and create alternatives while, ultimately, fostering job creation (Hénard, Diamond & Roseveare, 2012).

There were several factors that contributed to this internationalization; along with Erasmus, two declarations and one strategy impacted the European higher education. The Sorbonne Declaration (1998), the Bologna Declaration (1999) and the Lisbon Strategy (2000) - all these made European Study Programmes more compatible and transparent, and have placed an accent on the fact that higher education institutions will be crucial to Europe's future well-being and that stronger cooperation between countries and universities is necessary for success (Beerkens & Vossensteyn, 2011). The Bologna Declaration, in its core, has emphasized an operational objective, the establishment of a cycle system of Study Programmes and degrees all over Europe (Teicher, 2014) while the goal of the Lisbon strategy was to “make the Union 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” (Bourdon, 2014). A study has also shown that Bologna process has resulted in the increase in the student mobilities, but consequently it has also resulted in the increase of the university administrators’ workload. Administrators are required to provide more student support, they are not in compliance with the policy regarding language development, they lack knowledge of local and international student socialization, and their additional workload is an unfunded mandate for their universities (Billingsley, F., 2012).

Erasmus Programme offers a variety of options; however, when it comes to student mobility for studies, students are facing the problem in terms of choosing the foreign institutions due to the lack of suitable information available on universities’ websites. At the same time, the last decade has produced tremendous innovation in how people connect with one another online; social networks have experienced a rapid increase in popularity, producing both concerns (privacy, content ownership) and opportunities (Simens G., Weller M. 2011), and this popularity should be used to make a positive impact in terms of information availability, when referring to student exchange.

European Universities have embraced the Erasmus Programme as a means to internationalization, as this Programme was set to improve people’s skills and competences to develop a highly skilled labour force, gradually modernize education systems and strengthen Europe’s position as a knowledge-based economy (Gonzalez, 2011). The target set by the Ministry involved in the Bologna process in 2009 in Leuven (Belgium) stating that, by the year 2020, about 20 % of the students in Europe should have spent at least a period in another country during their course of study, indicated that the single highest aim of student mobility policy in Europe is to help students get prepared for an internationalizing world (Teicher, 2014) and that cross-cultural communication is a key skill developed by an exchange (Links, 2015).

Studies have shown that Erasmus Programme also contributes to creating a European identity among students and graduates. According to the Erasmus Impact Study, 80 percent of Erasmus students feel a strong attachment to Europe and this sense of belonging seems to be particularly reinforced by social or intimate ties with people from abroad: 33 percent of the Erasmus alumni stated that they had a life partner of a different nationality, while 27 percent had met their current life partner during their stay abroad (Brandenburg U., Taboadela O., & Vancea, M., 2015).

Similarly, a study conducted at Turkish Gazi University, has shown that graduate Erasmus students of Gazi University find the program significantly effective on their career paths. According to the results of the questionnaire, it can be said that Erasmus mobility contributes to social, interpersonal, communicational, professional and foreign language skills (Güreşen, 2013). Studies have also shown that majority of former Erasmus students are convinced that the Erasmus mobility experience was helpful for them to obtain their first job (Jang J., 2009).

The Erasmus Programme contributes to quality improvement in higher education at 3 levels: system (policy), institutional, and individual, and, thus, enhances the employability of university graduates who have taken part in Erasmus mobility (Bryla, 2015). Also, 90 % of students consider that the mobility has had a positive influence on their personal development (Dolga L., Filipescu H., Popescu-Mitroi MM., Mazilescu C.A., 2015). Although De Wit argues that having many international students does not equal internationalization, and that simply having international students is not sufficient (De Wit, 2011), in general, universities are considered to be a main measure of progress in a country and provide the basis for the dynamic competition of a country in the region and in the world; thus, strengthening the international aspect of higher education is the strengthening of a country in the regional and international competitions too (Roga R., Lapina I., & Mürsepp P., 2015).

The main idea of this article is to present the solution to the problem of the insufficient information available on the European universities' web sites. This problem can be solved with creation of so called EUniversity-book, online community that would include all the European universities that carry out the Erasmus + Programme and would contain all the most important information that students need when applying for mobility at a foreign institution. Social interaction is at the heart of an online community, a research done by Paolo Spagnoletti, Andrea Resca and Gwanhoo Lee has defines three distinct types of social interaction structures: information sharing, collaboration and collective action (Spagnoletti P., Resca A., Lee G (2015). Although majority of the universities do provide Erasmus information on their websites, university websites are not created by Erasmus officers, thus Erasmus officers do not have administrative access in order to update the information. With the use of online platform Erasmus officers would be in charge of profiles and would be able to update the profiles whenever necessary. The idea is to create a network, via platform similar to those of social networks, the profiles would provide basic information about the institution, information on how to apply for Erasmus mobility, course catalogue, information on the language of instruction, accommodation, medical care, living costs, and events along with the info such as the Erasmus code, important contacts – Erasmus offices, departmental Erasmus coordinators; application procedures. Usage of the same platform would simplify the information seeking process and help students find all the information they need to prepare themselves for living and studying abroad for several months.

Subsequently, it could also be beneficial in terms of internationalization. Easier access to the information could not only increase the number of mobilities, it could also have an impact on the diversity of mobility destinations.

2. Problem of insufficient information for students

To address young people, students and researchers, the European Commission is using several digital ways, such as social media - Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and blogs, in order to inform them on mobility opportunities (Asderaki F., 2012). And while there are several websites created to help students find the educational institutions, these sites do not contain detailed information for Erasmus students. At the same time, studies have shown that social media tools can help in the

information search process; however the students lack awareness of postsecondary institutions use of social media for disseminating relevant information (Bhardwaj, A., 2015).

Since the European Commission has developed Mobility Tool (European Commission Homepage, 2017) which provides an overview of all the student and staff mobilities at all participating universities (each university has to create a profile of each student/staff member participating in Erasmus+ mobility) a network which would include all the European universities that carry out the Erasmus+ Programme could be implemented through the Mobility Tool and via national mobility agencies, where a link for the profile creation could be provided to all the participating universities (European Commission Homepage, 2017). Once the universities created their profiles, the network link would be placed on each university's web site.

2. 1. Context and method

An international survey was conducted to gain the information on usefulness and need for such network. Although the survey itself is focused on European universities, since the beginning of the Erasmus+ Programme, the scheme is no longer limited to European countries; therefore the survey was also filled out by some non-European students. The survey was prepared based on frequently asked questions sent on behalf of incoming and outgoing students to the email address of the Zagreb University of Applied Science International office. Targeted students were only those students who are at the moment doing their Erasmus mobility or have recently finished their Erasmus student mobility for studies. The survey was conducted on 270 students; the response rate was fairly good in the countries with a large number of exchange students while students from partner counties (Peru, Mexico) as well as from Iceland and Greece were represented with surprisingly extreme low response rate (one response per country).

2.2 Research analysis

When choosing the host institutions, students need information on class syllabus, as well as the language of instruction. They also need to find accommodation and deal with several administrative issues, Erasmus codes, departmental coordinators, as well as requesting personal identification numbers and residence permits for the foreign county and possible medical emergencies, and often that information is hard to find. When searching for the information about their Erasmus mobility destination students have several options. The first one is usually the institution's website. As the survey results have shown, 71.5% of students (193) reported they used the institutional web sites in order to gather the necessary information but, at the same time, when asked to what extent they used the institutional web sites, only 22.6 % of students (61) stated that they had gathered all the necessary information from the institutional website.

| Type of information | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately | For the most part | Completely |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| General information | 3 (1, 1%) | 19 (7 %) | 81 (30 %) | 115 (42, 4%) | 52 (19, 3%) |
| Classes and language | 8 (3 %) | 31 (11, 5%) | 66 (24, 4%) | 110 (40,7 %) | 55 (20, 4%) |
| Accommodation | 37 (13, 7%) | 57 (21, 1%) | 69 (25, 6%) | 62 (23 %) | 45 (16, 7%) |

Table 3 Extent to what students (number and percentage) thought institutional websites provided useful information regarding four types of information.

Furthermore, only 19,3 % (52 students) have responded that the institutional site had provided all the necessary information regarding the general information, while only 20.4 % (55 students) were completely satisfied regarding the information on classes and language of instruction provided by institutional websites. Only 7, 8 % (21 students) found sufficient information about medical issues. Based on the survey, it is clear that students do not have access to all the information they need. Numbers show that the first place where students look for the information about foreign institutions is the foreign institution's website. At the same time, websites provide only partial information that Erasmus students need; therefore, students are forced to search for the information elsewhere.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

3.1. Overall results

The mobility of students, researchers and academic staff, as well as the mobility of the knowledge or the knowledge products, lie at the centre of internationalization policies (Asderaki F., 2012). Easier access to necessary information in order to facilitate the mobilities and, thus, the exchange of knowledge and knowledge products, would contribute automatically to internationalization.

As shown in the survey results, students gather most of the information about their mobility destinations from universities' websites. However, those sites often do not contain sufficient information. Out of 270 students less than a quarter of them claimed they found all the necessary information on the institutional website. This data does not go in favour of universities and, subsequently, it does not go in favour with their internationalization policies. This problem could be solved by creating a network using one profile pattern, where all the universities would upload the requested information in English, thus making all the necessary information available in one place. A study conducted at two US universities has shown that the most dominant usage of social networks, in terms of university, is for resource material sharing and searching. Social networks and online communities are a part of today`s society, as well as education. As such they give us the opportunity to create various tools for collaboration and information sharing.

3.2 Future research

Today's education places much emphasis on internationalization, which is done mainly through Student Exchange Programmes. Internationalization is a considerable part of the modern Higher Education (HE) policy agenda at global, regional, national and institutional levels. The next step would be to create the network and create an actual profile (of Zagreb University of Applied Sciences). If the profile shows a positive impact on the mobility, the next step would be to introduce the platform to the Croatian National Agency for EU Programmes. If the initiative was accepted, such network would be beneficial for all participants of the Programme. It would provide all the necessary information about institutions in one place, thus making the mobilities less demanding and less time consuming in terms of organization for students, staff as well as international officers. Consequently, this would make the mobilities simpler and would result in a positive impact on internationalization, communication and social cohesion.

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: PROBLEMS OF THE OUTGOING ERASMUS+ STUDENT WHILE TRAVELLING ABROAD

A CASE STUDY OF LOSING PASSPORT IN THE THIRD COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT

A crisis could be defined as a situation or an event unexpectedly threatening or endangering the institution's legitimacy or image with a negative outcome and should be managed with care to protect its fundamental goals and reputation. While crises happen normally at an organisational level, it mostly affects persons and sometimes it happens the other way; the persons live through crisis situations and their problem-solving are done by the institutions. Most crisis situations on higher educational level are an example for the second assumption.

This work is a case analysis for the crisis management and communication one by the Istanbul Esenyurt University- International Office during a crisis situation of one of their outgoing student's loss of his passport during his travels at a third country. Furkan Şimşek has been sent as an outgoing Erasmus+ Exchange student to Lubnin University of Technology in Poland. During his travels to Italy-Milano on 4.10.2017 his passport was stolen. He reported the situation on the road to Bergama Airport to the police and at the same time to his home Universities International Office almost at midnight via WhatsApp. The student had no documents to prove his situation as an Erasmus+ student visiting another country on legal basis. The International Office sent him his visa and passport copy post-haste and contacted the Consulate of Italy in Turkey as well as the Turkish Consulate in Milano. Even if it was on a Sunday, the Consulate helped the student to get a temporary passport enabling him to fly to Poland. As soon as possible the student has visited the public offices to get his residence permit and applied for another temporary passport to wait for his own to get approved by Turkish Authorities. The International Office has supported the student during this crisis and stayed in close contact to avert a possible crises on institutional level as well as international level.

CRISIS

A crisis could be defined as a situation or an event unexpectedly threatening or endangering the institution's legitimacy or image with a negative outcome and should be managed with care to protect its fundamental goals and reputation. And while a crisis on institutional level could be defined this way, it is also important to define it at a personal level. In that case a crisis is also the situation where the usual coping mechanisms have failed in face of a perceived or real threat or challenge, normally an emotional condition.

Educational institutions face both kinds of situations day by day seeing they are dealing with everyday situations of daily crisis conditions and extraordinary situations which may happen in forms of school shootings, critical injuries to students or staff, thefts, natural disasters or personal ones like suicide, sudden accidents etc.

The characteristics of crises have been identified by many scientists but we choose to use the definition of Raphael (1986):

- rapid time sequences
- an overwhelming of the usual coping responses of individuals and communities
- severe disruption, at least temporarily, to the functioning of individuals or communities and
- perceptions of threat and helplessness and a turning to others for help.

The emphasis should lie on words like “overwhelm” and “perceptions”. No matter who is living through a crisis situation the reality is what is being perceived. The perception of threats and helplessness is a serious way to disrupt any homeostasis and results in feelings of being in danger.

For schools and other educational institutions those might happen in disrupted school routines or threatening of student’s way of life, safety and in any kind of equilibrium achieved. Individuals handle crisis situations differently, they have different responses and reactions may differ depending on personal risk factors (Brock, 2011). He also states that the personal risk factors include physical proximity, emotional proximity and personal vulnerabilities. Individuals with less social support and weak coping skills could have stronger threat perception and could be more affected by the incident and educational institutions are pressed hard to remember those points in order to be successful on crisis management.

Flannery and Everly also focus on those points and try to clear some of those terms in order to gain an effective perspective then most of them are used interchangeably.

According to them (Flannery and Everly, 2000), a crisis is a response condition where:

- psychological homeostasis has been disrupted
- the individual’s usual coping mechanisms have failed to re-establish homeostasis and
- the distress engendered by the crisis has yielded some evidence of functional impairment.

The equilibrium and homeostasis of individuals and institutions are crucial then the crisis reactions may also change from time to time and it is important for the aftercare to have observing and assessments of the conditions in order to handle the needs of individuals during the crisis and appropriate support afterwards.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crisis management is a process designed to prevent or lessen the damage a crisis can inflict on an organization and its stakeholders. As a process, crisis management is not just one thing but an accumulation of different procedures and reactions to crisis situations.

Crisis management can be analysed in three phases:

1. pre-crisis,
2. crisis response
3. post-crisis.

The pre-crisis phase is focused mostly on prevention and preparation. The crisis response phase is when managements must actually respond to a crisis and handle situation and all about taking control. The post-crisis phase is concerned with ways to better prepare for the next crisis and fulfils commitments made during the crisis phase including follow-up information and aftercare for the needs of individuals and if needed re-organizing of institutions.

Crises management has evolved from emergency preparedness and based on this, it comprises a set of four interrelated factors: prevention, preparation, response, and revision (Coombs, W. T. 2015, p.3).

PPRR (prevention, preparation, response, recovery) may have had its origins in the work of Caplan (1964), who described three levels of crisis intervention and is someone fundamental in researching crisis conditions:

1. primary intervention, which consists of activities devoted to preventing a crisis from occurring (this would equate to prevention in the PPRR model);
2. secondary intervention or the steps taken in the immediate aftermath of a crisis to minimize the effects and keep the crisis from escalating (this would equate to response);
3. tertiary intervention, which involves providing long-term follow-up assistance to those who have experienced a severe crisis (this would equate to recovery, dealt with in the second part of the current review).

PPRR approach was developed nearly 50 years ago and of courses it needed to change some aspects of it in order to cover more level then at the fundamental form it has serious problems. For one, this approach considers the four elements independent from each other and make barriers. Crondstedt (2002) believes this leads to unnecessary debate about categorising actions into one of the elements, rather than debate about the effectiveness of specific actions. Secondly, according to this approach all elements are considered with the same importance level and there must be strategies that fall under each element. But risk management does not fall under any of it and falls short. And the third point is that the elements assume a sequential consideration of the PPRR process and that they must be considered and implemented in the same order all the time. But there must be chaotic environments also be considered and the deployment of appropriate actions and reaction no matter in which category the situation is.

It should be remembered well that rapid developments in communication technology, on the one hand, provide the opportunity to meet with the target in a short period of time in the crisis communication process, and on the other hand contribute to the rapid spread of the crisis (Peltekoğlu, 2014, p.449). This very point made possible to take actions for most educational institutions that provide abroad studies for their students all over the world. Most of their crisis management processes and plans are based on availability and accessibility of international offices and students 24/7.

It is necessary to plan for proactive crisis planning, in order to be ready for the possible crises without considering the size of the institutions. An effective crisis planning and healthy crisis communication is the aim of the organization to protect the organization and ensure that the crisis is minimized as much as possible (Okay and Okay, 2013, p.359). One person crises mostly offer

chances in order to avoid future crisis conditions if they have been studied and can result in appropriate identifying methods and prospective measures.

In identifying potential crises, it would be useful to examine the crises experienced by some organizations operating in the same field in the past, to know the legal regulations in the country in which the organization operates, and to determine how a crisis could affect the internal and external target group (Regester, 1995, p.159). For the above mentioned educational institutions this issues about local regulations and other requirements is of most importance. Students are effected by those laws in visa issues or accommodation processes but also in their travels from the host country into third countries or even continents. According to the international law, every citizen is subjected to the national laws but while they are living in another country their daily life and situations are subjected according to the territory principles of the law, meaning no matter the citizenship the countries laws are considered a priori.

METHODOLOGY

In order to explain the situation our student has found himself in and study it further to achieve an explanatory base for prospective crisis situation the Illustrative Case Studies method was used.

A case study is a research method involving an up-close, in-depth, and detailed examination of a subject of study (the case), as well as its related contextual conditions. In doing case study research, the "case" being studied may be an individual, organization, event, or action, existing in a specific time and place.

The case analysis method provides the opportunity to move from narrow, specialized view that emphasizes functional techniques to a broader, less precise analysis for overall cooperation (Wheelen, and Hunger.320). Illustrative Case Studies are used to describe a situation or a phenomenon, what is happening with it, and why it is happening.

This is often helpful when the study is addressing a target audience that is greatly uninformed about the topic. These studies describe every element involved in a case (the location, people involved, their goals, what they do, etc.) in a way that remains entirely accurate while still focusing on language that will be understandable by the target audience.

Under the more generalized category of case study exist several subdivisions, each of which is custom selected for use depending upon the goals of the investigator (Hayes et al., 2015):
Illustrative case studies. These are primarily descriptive studies. They typically utilize one or two instances of an event to show the existing situation. Illustrative case studies serve primarily to make the unfamiliar familiar and to give readers a common language about the topic in question.

Exploratory (or pilot) case studies. These are condensed case studies performed before implementing a large scale investigation. Their basic function is to help identify questions and select types of measurement prior to the main investigation. The primary pitfall of this type of study is that initial findings may seem convincing enough to be released prematurely as conclusions.

Cumulative case studies. These serve to aggregate information from several sites collected at different times. The idea behind these studies is that the collection of past studies will allow for greater generalization without additional cost or time being expended on new, possibly repetitive studies.

Critical instance case studies. These examine one or more sites either for the purpose of examining a situation of unique interest with little to no interest in generalization, or to call into question a highly generalized or universal assertion. This method is useful for answering cause and effect questions.

THE TOPIC AND THE PURPOSE OF THE CASE STUDY

The purpose of the case study is making proactive crisis planning and developing suggestions for the International Offices while defining and analysing an Erasmus+ outgoing student crises based on the experiences and crises of students in this case the subject of this case study is Furkan Şimşek.

Furkan Şimşek has been sent as an outgoing Erasmus+ Exchange student to Lubnin University of Technology in Poland from Istanbul Esenyurt University in Turkey. He studies Electrical-Electronical Engineering and choose to enrich his study time with an Erasmus+ exchange and having as many travels and intercultural meeting as possible.

During his travels to Italy-Milano on 4.11.2017 his passport was stolen. After struggling for a time he managed to contact the International Office of Istanbul Esenyurt University and explained his situation to his coordinators almost at midnight via WhatsApp. From this point on he acted according to the guidance of them.

During his travel to Italia he was a subject to the Italian National Laws, so he had to report the situation on the road to Bergama Airport to the police. The student had no documents to prove his situation as an Erasmus+ student visiting another country on legal basis.

The International Office sent him his visa and passport copy post-haste and contacted the Consulate of Italy in Turkey as well as the Turkish Consulate in Milano. While travelling in Italy makes him a subject to national laws, he also remains a Turkish citizen and received unconditional help from legal and technical authorities of the consulate.

Even if it was on a Sunday, the Consulate helped the student to get a temporary passport enabling him to fly to Poland (where his host university is). Afterwards, as soon as possible the student has visited the public offices to get his residence permit and applied for another temporary passport to wait for his own to get approved by Turkish Authorities.

The International Office has supported the student during this crisis and stayed in close contact to avert any other possible crises on institutional level as well as international level. In this context, passport losing outgoing student and a kind of crisis after the student loss his passport constitutes the subject of the study.

CONCLUSION

When a crisis situation is happening the most important issue on the hand is communication and ability to move swiftly.

Looking back at the case on hand, the International Office was available to communicate at midnight with the student and other authorities. They had access to the official documents of the students because they had an online archive giving them the possibility to work everywhere and at any time. The International Office sent him his visa and passport copy post-haste and contacted the Consulate of Italy in Turkey as well as the Turkish Consulate in Milano.

The crisis was managed without resulting in the student victimization, inter- institutional and international crime.

After this situation the Office implemented some rules and processes to follow at crisis situations.

At institutional level:

- Obvious need for a crisis intervention and support plan
- Coordinate all resources, in and outside school, and provide timely and appropriate intervention and support as needed
- Provide support to all stake holders (students- staff-families)
- Compose a Crisis Management Team if possible, if not there should be an obvious distribution of roles and duties between the office coordinators.
- If needed compose the department of Staff and Student Social Workers
- Designate a Media Liaison if needed
- Compose a phone tree
- Prepare and distribute necessary documents and materials
- Prepare annual crisis plans
- Plan for crisis occurring during school holiday
- Plan for physical threats to students, faculty, and staff
- Provide counseling for students immediately following crisis

At individual level:

- It is important for the educational institutions staff to know their responsibilities clearly
- Be prepared for any physical threats to students, faculty, and staff
- Be prepared for victims of violence/bullying
- Be prepared for natural disasters
- Be prepared for an accident that occurs on the way to or from school
- Be prepared for a hate crime that occurs outside of school
- Be prepared for issues of material situations like thefts
- Be prepared for the loss of the mobile phone
- Be prepared to arrive at a safe point in case of crisis
- Get information about the nearest Consulate or Embassy
- Get information about the nearest police station
- Get information about your rights and responsibilities according to the national laws
- Have a way to reach the international office of the host university and home university
- Keep passports and other crucial documents copies electronically.

It is of utmost importance for the students to have a way to reach their International Offices, a way to achieve it might be to have availability via WhatsApp or Google Groups or other e-ways through interactive media portals. Another point is to warn the students in a realistic way what they might experience and possible ways to fight it.

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SERVICE LEARNING IN THE REFUGEE EFFORT

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ABSTRACT

The roots of Service Learning can be discovered in the ideas of progressive education, which encompasses so many valuable insights about inquiry-based, practical, and service-oriented learning. Service Learning at the Berlin School of Economics and Law began in 2016 as a response to the recent refugee challenge. It offers business students the opportunity to discover the value of volunteerism while they create and develop their own organizational innovations for existing projects on the ground. Today our goal is to encourage many more universities across Europe to introduce programmes in community service and learning. Our vision includes a larger, pan-European project base enabling undergraduates to experience service in their local communities and also in the host locations they visit. The following report outlines what we have learned thus far in the hope to attract partners in this pursuit.

In her Service-Learning Essentials, author Barbara Jacoby, PhD¹ defines service-learning² “as a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes.”³ She bases her own thinking about service-learning on Andrew Furco’s model (1996) which distinguishes between five related but nevertheless unique types of community activities and their degree of focus between service and learning. According to Furco, Volunteerism and Community Service are two areas of work which are organized mainly to benefit the person or group served, whereas Field Education and Internships are intended first and foremost to enhance student learning. It is the balance between these four activities which Furco and Jacoby see as the real definition and deeply pedagogical nature of service-learning.

In this short paper I attempt to introduce and explain some of our assumptions, concerns and efforts to establish a Service Learning course programme at the Berlin School of Economics and Law (Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin – HWR) which addresses the needs of the thousands of refugees who arrived in Berlin/Brandenburg after mid-2015, while providing our business students with a framework for learning and contributing. I begin with a short overview of what happened in 2015, beginning in the late summer and beyond, with my personal impressions

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² Jacoby uses the hyphen in service-learning to symbolize reflection, depicting the relationship between service and learning.

³ Jacoby, Barbara, Service-Learning Essentials, pp. 1+2.

and experiences. This should help explain why and how universities like BSEL responded as they did.

2015-2016 – THE FLOW OF REFUGEES TO GERMANY AND BERLIN

In 2015 about 1.1 million refugees⁴ crossed some southern borders into Germany. Most of them were from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In Berlin, almost 10,000 refugees arrived in November 2015 alone. Seeking sanctuary in the year 2015-2016, close to 85,000 refugees were brought to the city, the vast majority in buses and trains from southern cities like Munich, and all in need of shelter, food, and health facilities. With the help of local volunteers (without volunteers the situation would have been impossible to manage) emergency sites in all of Berlin's districts were set up; beds were assembled, rooms were assigned, and volunteers were organized into work groups in charge of meals, clothing, medical assistance, as translators and child-minders. In my local NUK (Notunterkunft = emergency site), young organizers like the then 27 year-old Philipp Bertram began organizing the local volunteers whose ages ranged from about 18 to 80. With the help of the online volunteer-planer, all of us were able to find where and when we were most needed. Addressing her government's refugee policies during the German Federal Press Conference on August 31, 2015 Angela Merkel famously declared "Das schaffen wir!" (We can manage this!)⁵.

We were very fortunate that the weather was dry and warm between August and October, 2015. Since our NUK was a vacated public building, the hot water had been turned off (and was not turned on again until November!); temporary showers were set up in the outside courtyard. We cooked outside, and carried the food to the 4th floor cafeteria, where we also accepted the many donations coming in from bakeries and restaurants throughout the district. Officially, the city-state of Berlin was ill-equipped to handle the emergency needs of so many newcomers, so it was left to the neighborhoods to respond as best they could. I experienced this period as highly energizing, innovative and hospitable. It felt good to be here contributing to an effort we knew was desperately needed. I met a few refugees during this period whom I call my friends today; we all met as volunteers in workshifts in the cafeteria or in other activities. One of my friends from Iraq whom I cleaned tables with back then is now working in his professional field as a Computer Specialist, has his own flat, and is financially independent. As a 26 year-old, he had walked alone with his smart phone GPS a good part of the way from Baghdad. It had taken him most of the summer of 2015, and he had not known where he was going; the driving forces were all push rather than pull factors.

There is of course, much more to this story of the fall of 2015 and thereafter, and it unfortunately includes state and federal incompetence and the unwillingness/inability to handle an emergency situation effectively and efficiently. This seems to be especially true of the city of Berlin. Perhaps the response of Berliners was so amazing because of their lack of trust in local authorities. Suffice it to say that where government oversight and organization was needed, Berlin appeared to be failing in profound and fundamental ways. Employees at the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs (LaGeSo – Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales) were so overwhelmed with what they suddenly had to manage that by the end of January 2016 close to 50% were on sick

⁴ <https://www.dw.com/en/nearly-11-million-migrants-arrived-in-germany-in-2015/a-18952130>

⁵ https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2015/08_en/2015-08-31-sommer-pk-der-kanzlerin_en.html

leave. This meant that a growing number of refugees were not receiving the basic financial support they needed to survive. The situation became more and more critical throughout the winter of 2015-16, as queues of desperate people lined up outside of the LaGeSo office day and night in the cold.⁶ More and more individual Berliners became engaged in trying to help. Some brought food and warm drinks to the queues of people mentioned above, while others started creating their own projects, networking online with others to help find temporary housing, legal advice, to address health issues, and accompany parents and children to Welcome Classes.⁷

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY AND FUNDING IN GERMANY – FACTS AND CHALLENGES

In this short summary, we now turn to Germany's federal system of refugee distribution, which includes tasks that all municipalities must by law undertake to promote social and economic integration. This is not to say that all citizens of the country are aware of these responsibilities, or that they agree with them, but in my estimation most cities and towns across the country have been trying to deliver these services as best they can. I sketch only the basics for the first-phase response to the large flow of refugees to Germany 2015-2016 in four points:

Refugees are distributed proportionately across the country according to tax revenues and total population. This is a quota system, which was originally agreed to for the distribution of federal resources, tax-based and according to population. It has a history of heated debate, but it can be said that the quota system is an attempt to be fair, equitable, and efficient.

The simplicity of the quota system imposes burdens on the larger cities because it does not take population density into account, nor can it be adjusted to local conditions, including access to housing, etc. Berlin, the largest German city and its seat of government, has about 3.5 million inhabitants (formally Berlin, capital of the GDR, and West-Berlin). Like Bremen and Hamburg, the city boundaries limit the potential for new housing without the communication with the state of Brandenburg, which surrounds the city.

How are funds allocated to the German Länder? According to a Brookings report⁸ the current framework for the allocation of funds and expenditures burdens the German city-states and other larger cities (eg. Frankfurt and Munich) disproportionately. Since the reimbursement rates from the federal government are uniform, the substantial differences in housing costs, cost of living, or social services expenditures to German urban inhabitants are ignored.

The Brookings report summarizes that cities in Germany, particularly Berlin and Hamburg, have been highly innovative in their response. Urban areas play a special role in their response to this

⁶ [Deutsche Wirtschaftswoche, 26 January, 2016.50 Prozent Krankenstand: Berliner LaGeSo kann Flüchtlingen kein Geld mehr auszahlen](https://deutsche-wirtschafts-nachrichten.de/2016/01/26/50-prozent-krankenstand-berliner-lageso-kann-fluechtlingen-kein-geld-mehr-auszahlen) <https://deutsche-wirtschafts-nachrichten.de/2016/01/26/50-prozent-krankenstand-berliner-lageso-kann-fluechtlingen-kein-geld-mehr-auszahlen/>

⁷ For more information on these classes, please see the Welcome Center at <https://www.berlin.de/willkommenszentrum/en/families/schools/>

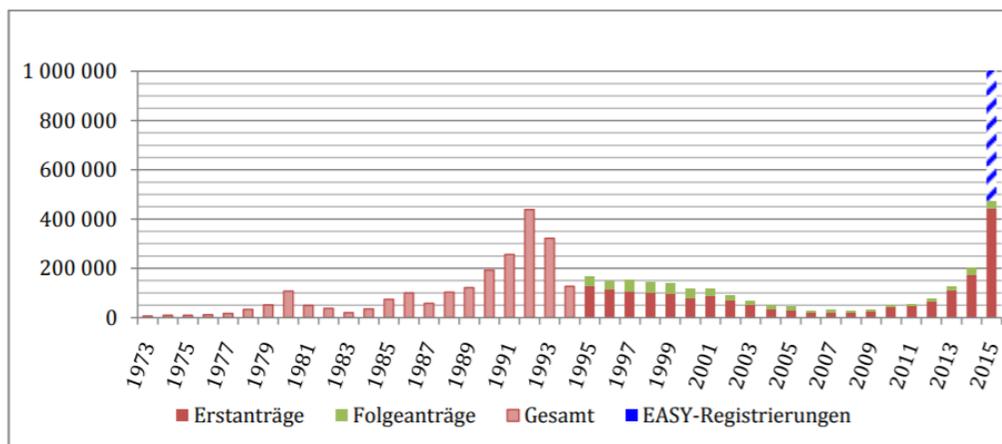
⁸ Cities and refugees: The German experience, by Bruce Katz, Luise Noring, and Nantke Garrelts. Sunday, September 18, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/cities-and-refugees-the-german-experience/>

type of emergency, and also in the longer-term efforts to integrate newcomers. In both cities, innovations were largely introduced by and with the active participation of civil society.⁹

ASYLUM SEEKERS IN GERMANY

Whereas the large influx of refugees reflects a major social challenge to Germany, many economists and politicians in the country point to the benefits this number can mean for the ageing German population. Government organizations and NGOs have implemented programmes to train and skill-up asylum seekers so that growing shortages in the work-force can be met. Although this is seen with scepticism by a growing number of Germans, on the whole, I believe the vast majority of people in Germany view this as an opportunity, if done well. So the attitude and public dialogue has transformed into one that focuses on what refugees require to become contributing members of German society, including language learning, skills in trade and services, and steps towards integration into the society of this country. These paths to integration will entail hard work over time; hard work by the hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers who come from very different cultures, but also great efforts by the host majority. This will require the ability to recognize what is needed in terms of policy and new legal frameworks including the costs of this process, and the willingness to persevere for many years to come.

Asylum applications in Germany 1973-2015



10

Translations: Erstanträge - first-time applications/Folgeanträge - subsequent applications/Gesamt - total/EASY-Registrierungen – fast-track registrations (initiated by BAMF)

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ <https://pl.boell.org/en/2016/04/22/germany-refugee-crisis-background-reactions-and-challenges>. It should be noted here that the number of asylum applications has fallen very significantly since the end of 2016. The reasons for this include the highly debated EU agreement with Turkey, in which the Turkish government is paid to keep refugees in Turkey rather than allow smugglers to transport them to Greece, an EU member country.

SERVICE LEARNING AT THE BERLIN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND LAW

In 2016, many if not all of Berlin's universities and universities of applied science began to kick-start their efforts in contributing to a competent and humane handling of the refugee challenge. At BSEL our management initiated the JUST programme which encourages refugees to join courses designed to help ease them into the culture of learning in higher education in Germany. The programme includes German language classes, and offers a physical place for social interaction.¹¹ In a summer school initiative, BSEL students teach classes to refugees whose goal it is to continue their higher education in this country.¹² To bundle all of these and other initiatives which are developing throughout the university, a new position of Coordinator of Refugee Affairs was established in 2016.

As the name suggests, BSEL is a university of applied science specializing in undergraduate and graduate business and economics education with a wide range of course disciplines, including business law, entrepreneurship, business informatics, public sector administration and management, etc. In the affiliated Berlin Professional School (BPS) students study towards a number of MBA degrees. In the general studies elective programme (Studium Generale – St.G.) all students may register for courses in addition to their specific programmes. These St.G. courses grant credits but do not satisfy requirements of the various disciplines.

As an elective in the St.G. programme we began the first course in “Service Learning in the Refugee Effort” in the spring of 2016. For the university and for myself, this was the first university-wide course of its kind, a pilot effort. I had been looking for an opportunity to introduce the ideas associated with community service and experiential learning for some time, and I was engaged in volunteering in my district and career mentoring with the newly established organization SINGA Deutschland.¹³

ASSUMPTIONS AND INITIAL DESIGN OF THE COURSE

In higher education it is imperative to achieve community improvements with the understanding that field experience alone is not sufficient to reach learning goals set by ambitious curricula. In service-learning taught at this level, instructors should be aware of their responsibility for establishing teaching methods to enhance individual and group reflection and achieve learning outcomes. In this light, service-learning is a unique and clear methodology in which students learn by paying attention in the field, by listening to and engaging with people in their work environments. They report on these “findings” and reflect together with others on the perspectives and viewpoints of people who live different lives. Service-learning is also designed to include

¹¹ For more details on this ongoing programme, please see <https://www.hwr-berlin.de/en/study-at-hwr-berlin/study-programmes/join-us-and-study-just/>

¹² For a report in English on the first BSEL (HWR) Summer School, please see <https://www.hwr-berlin.de/en/service/press/press-releases/details/article/the-first-summer-school-for-refugees-at-the-bsel-comes-to-an-end/>

¹³ SINGA Deutschland operates a business lab, a professional/career mentoring programme, so-called living room events, as well as regular language cafés. More details at: <https://singa-deutschland.com/en/>.

historical, economic, social, cultural and political contexts, allowing students to seek and find answers to the questions they have as they pursue volunteer work in their communities. As a business school, each course needs to be embedded into our larger departmental framework, and to fit the corporate culture of the institution. This means we always have a focus on establishing an understanding of the status quo, and carefully define the problems that need to be solved. Next, we develop ideas for innovations which become a strategy for managing the process required to achieve solutions. Finally, these strategies for solutions can be used as blueprints for others.

Given the fact that the refugee situation from 2015 was in the news on an hourly basis here in Germany, the breaking news pace of media coverage was quite overwhelming, and challenging for the design of the course. At the heart of the programme it seemed imperative to offer mini-lectures as to the history of recent causes for the flow of migrants and refugees to Europe. In addition, EU policy according to the Schengen and Dublin agreements became core lecture components. An overview of the laws and regulations applying to asylum in Germany and the EU was necessary for students to gain an understanding of the fact that Germany had long ignored addressing issues of immigration. Many politicians had for years claimed that Germany was not 'a country of immigration', so the resistance to change was very real. At the same time, however, I thought it appropriate to point out to students how many waves of immigration there have been in this country, especially since the end of WWII; a success story which has not always been reported as such in the media.¹⁴

Since the course first began in 2016, a few invited guests have enhanced the short lectures by offering their personal narratives as newcomers to Berlin. We have also been fortunate to have others join us who are professionals in the organizations that handle local or federal policy (e.g. local NGOs and a representative from BAMF). Bringing in activists who are motivated about what they do is clearly a plus for everyone, but it is also a challenge as we have no real incentives and no budget to cover compensation fees of any kind.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE AND CREDITS AWARDED

This new course in service-learning differs from standard 2 SWS formats (90 minutes per week for 16-17 weeks) due to the time students agree to work in the field. Requirements include

- a. 30 hours of volunteer work in the field which is about once a week throughout the semester
- b. Onsite exchange in class every fortnight (or less often in longer sessions)
- c. Interim written update (one page) on field work in the second month of the semester
- d. Final presentation of work experience in class
- e. Final written report with photo documentation of work experience. This is posted in our class blog <https://blog.hwr-berlin.de/humanrights/hwr-service-learning/>.

¹⁴ For more information on migration history in Germany, see the introduction at DOMiD – Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany: <https://www.domid.org/en/migration-history-germany>. Also, the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) has published an overview incl. current statistics at <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/laenderprofile/262758/historical-and-current-development-of-migration-to-and-from-germany>.

Although this is adjustable, students to date have earned 2.5 credits for successful completion of this course, which is assessed in pass-fail mode.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The main challenges thus far have been manageable, albeit very time-consuming. The first is that some students have a 'what's in it for me' attitude and do not register for any of our Studium Generale electives. Although credits can be earned, none of these courses satisfy requirements. This weakness can perhaps be seen as systemic. For a few, when confronted with the fact that the course adds real time to be spent in their weekly agenda, too many give up. Next, of the business students who are interested and do register for the course, a major challenge for lecturers and students alike seems to be the on-boarding process. Initially, attracted to the idea of community service, students have often found it extremely challenging to actually get out there and begin. In 2016 almost all students were given specific information about emergency refugee sites with instructions and tips on how to start. They were told that it was essential to actually go to these sites, as most of the people working there were volunteers with no time to communicate with students who might be interested in helping! But the majority did not handle this easily at first. They tended to write emails to these places, trying first to get more information than available, and in a way, procrastinating, perhaps out of inhibition. But, once this hurdle is accepted and confronted, more students have been able to find their way and feel comfortable with their work in the field. Where possible and when there are enough enrolled students, one solution is to have pairs volunteering together at the same time and place.

In the onsite sessions, apart from the short interactive lectures, we also report on what has happened since the last class. Students are encouraged to reflect together on any issues of conflict they observe while working, or mention situations that make them feel uncomfortable in any way. In a storytelling, narrative mode, we have had conversations about sensitive gender issues and exchanged impressions students have had about child upbringing methods, differences in communication styles, etc. Once we have the chance to identify what we think we have seen, we are more able to see whether or how our own biases are affecting how we assess the situations we are in.

At BSEL we have several hundred guest students each semester, most of whom are in the Erasmus programme. Quite a number have been interested in our service-learning course in Berlin. They very often do not speak German well enough to actually communicate with locals, so creating bi-lingual pairs of students to go out into the field is one solution. In hindsight, it has been very encouraging and rewarding to see how some of our guest students have met Berliners of all ages who are civically active. They always report on how pleased they are to experience their stay in the city in this way. Not all Erasmus students have had this exposure.

Finally, lecturers have a balancing act to consider. They need to ensure support for young undergraduates where needed, individually or collectively. But they must also be willing to let go. As the teachers who offer courses in service-learning certainly feel strongly about the value of the enterprise, letting go may be quite a challenge.

TODAY AND TOMORROW – AN OUTLOOK

The course is evolving as the situation in Berlin and Germany changes. Today, we are no longer addressing emergency measures. Indeed, these initial steps now seem quite straightforward and easier to cope with, compared with the broader and deeper process of adaptation and integration

which confronts us today. Politically, there are also many more challenges to be addressed and administered.

The course 'Service Learning in the refugee effort' will continue, adapting to the new circumstances developing in the city. For WS 2017-2018 we are planning for students to go into schools to help teachers and refugee children in the Welcome Classes mentioned earlier in this report. There has been quite a lot of student interest, and many of the teachers of these classes are in desperate need of helpers. We know that time spent with individual children and adolescents can make significant contributions to them being able to 'graduate' into mainstreamed classes. We believe that student volunteers can profit immensely from this experience as well.

Business students are students of innovative management. Service-learning offers an opportunity to try out ideas, while driving and observing a real process. One of the participants from last semester told us he was not at all sure what he might be able to do in the emergency site he chose for his volunteering. But soon after he had started working evening shifts he found his niche. He reported that all of the volunteers and the city employees assigned to this residence were social workers who were wonderfully equipped to address the communication issues between people, but their office organization was appallingly chaotic. For example, once a resident had left the site, there was no record as to where the person had gone. Also, no records were being kept to carefully document which medicines had been distributed and to whom. So, he went to work putting some structure and process into how the office should be organized and managed. By the end of the semester he had evidence of what he had achieved and the resident director was very appreciative and grateful. Again, to read a variety of student experiences, please see our class blog: <https://blog.hwr-berlin.de/humanrights/hwr-service-learning/>.

In the Erasmus community we use words like diversity, unity, tolerance, friendship, respect, and even peace. Service-learning is an opportunity for all students to experience the lives of others and to contribute to the improvements of the people they serve. It is our hope that more universities in our Erasmus community will contact us so that we can address migration issues in Europe together - at our home institutions or at host universities – and offer our students the opportunity to contribute to a more unified Europe. In this spirit, please contact e_tilden@doz.hwr-berlin.de for collaboration.

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GreenTechWB MOBILITY: IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES AND SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION¹⁵

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation and rapid technological development are transforming the landscape of higher education while also playing a crucial role in societal advancement. To achieve a smart and inclusive economy together with a sustainable integration in Europe, the project GreenTechWB brings together beneficiaries from 10 EU countries (Spain, Poland, Portugal, Germany, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, Lithuania, France and Italy) and from 5 Western Balkan Partner Countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo¹⁶, Montenegro & Serbia). The action GreenTechWB, under the EACEA Erasmus Mundus Programme, was designed around the triangle cooperation-research-innovation in higher education and under the umbrella of the thematic field "Smart & Green Technologies for Innovative and Sustainable Societies in Western Balkans". The deployment of GreenTechWB included 153 undergraduate, master, PhD, post-doctorate and staff mobility grants in 3 cohorts until July 2018. Higher education mobility pursues (1) to produce a perdurable impact on beneficiaries' personal and professional development and (2) to make inter-institutional higher education relations sustainable. During the implementation of GreenTechWB, a series of satisfaction and follow-up surveys were carried out to observe these pursued results. Beyond the impact on beneficiaries, GreenTechWB also resulted in a fruitful cooperation between the University of Vigo and WB Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), mainly throughout a strong and centralised Erasmus + International Credit Mobility (Key Action 107) which took place for one week in Vigo, where around one hundred staff from HEIs in WB develop their professional activity. This paper reports the quantitative and qualitative results of GreenTechWB in terms of impact on individuals and institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Erasmus Mundus (EM) [1] is a cooperation and mobility programme focused on the higher education field that is managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Its name comes from Desiderius "Erasmus" Rotterdamus, a 15th Century Dutch humanist and theologian (a brilliant student), and "Mundus", the latin word for "world" (standing for the programme's global outreach). Precisely, its main objective was to create and reinforce bonds between EU and non-EU higher institutions by promoting a more active dialogue and a common understanding among different people and different cultures through the institutional cooperation with what the program calls Third Countries, i.e. countries that are not a member

¹⁵ This work is funded by the EC under the Erasmus Mundus GreenTechWB project (Ref. 551984-EM-1-2014-1-ES-ERA MUNDUS-EMA21, Grant Agreement n° 2014-0846-001-001-EMA2).

¹⁶ *According to the UN Security Council Resolution 1244

state of the European Union. In order to tackle this objective, the EM programme is organized into three different actions. Action 1, promotes outstanding quality joint masters and doctoral studies, including scholarships/fellowships. Action 2 supports Partnerships between European and Third Country Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including scholarships and fellowships for mobility at all academic levels. Finally, Action 3 has promoted European higher education through projects to enhance the attractiveness of Europe as an educational destination and a centre of excellence at world level.

Although EM has been developed from 2004 to 2014 in two stages: 2004-2008 and 2009-2013; Action 2 was already launched in 2006, within the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window (ECW). The underlying idea was to create the basis for enhancing academic cooperation and exchanges of students and academics, contributing to the socio-economic development of non-EU countries targeted by EU external cooperation policy. In this framework, special attention was given to disadvantaged groups and populations in vulnerable situations. In fact, the EACEA had elaborated its own global studies about the impact of these initiatives for the beneficiaries [2] (students and staff) and for the targeted area,

Under the roadmap of EU external cooperation policy, the GreenTechWB¹⁷ project (*Smart & Green Technologies for Innovative and Sustainable Societies in Western Balkans*) was selected in 2014 as an EM Action 2 (551984-EM-1-2014-1-ES-ERA MUNDUS-EMA21) with a partnership of 47 members (20 full partners and 27 associated members) from 10 different EU countries (Spain, Poland, Portugal, Germany, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, Lithuania, France and Italy) (including 9 full partners who had never participated in the Erasmus Mundus action 2 programme: 2 from Europe and 7 from the Partner countries) and a total of 154 mobilities organized in three cohorts, one per academic year, during its life (2014-2018). GreenTechWB was conceived by the authors of this paper and the University of Vigo with the clear purpose of boosting technological studies in the WB HEIs in the project. According to this orientation, all the EU partners were well-known institutions because of their technological and environmental areas of study. As requested by the EMA2 call, Mobility numbers were balanced to give the maximum priority to the flows from Western Balkans towards the European Union universities (125 from WB to UE and 28 from UE to WB). The number of the expected mobilities had risen from the minimum fixed in the call to 154 as we wished to foster mobility. The target groups were set in the EACEA 42/2011 Call. According to that call, at least 50% of the individual mobility was to be done under target group 1. As the proposal contained a number of balanced partner universities in all the target countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia, we believed that we would have suitable candidates under target group 1, especially as we were going to initiate a positive action towards less socio-economic favoured students, and also women population. We had also included mobility in Target Group 2 and this was the reason why we had also 17 associated HEIs from the EU and the WB. For BiH and Kosovo, we had included 2 mobilities under target group 3 for nationals who were in particularly vulnerable situations and at the undergraduate level considering the countries situation. At the same time, as it could be verified in the mobility flows, the consortia had concentrated efforts not only at undergraduate level (where there was a high demand for placements) but also at master, doctorate and post-doctorate level, fully respecting the indicative distribution percentages per mobility type included in the call. We had the following distribution: 37% for undergraduate, 21% for master, 14% for doctorate, 9% for post-doctorate and 19% for staff. The final distribution of flows guaranteed that all partner universities had the

¹⁷ <http://green-tech-wb.webs.uvigo.es/>

opportunity to select for the three cohorts the best candidates and that the European Union universities hosted a balanced number of participants. The academic offer of our consortium was clearly oriented to the thematic fields involved in this project, including a wide variety of disciplines.

Higher education mobility pursues (1) to produce a perdurable impact on beneficiaries' personal and professional development and (2) to make inter-institutional higher education relations sustainable. To guarantee the success of mobility and the durability of the links established among HEIs in the partnership, the implementation of the GreenTechWB project was totally supported by a specifically designed social network site and promoting the new technologies for communications and meetings. Also, during the implementation of GreenTechWB, a series of satisfaction and follow-up surveys were carried out to observe these pursued results. Beyond the impact on beneficiaries, GreenTechWB also resulted in a fruitful cooperation between the University of Vigo and WB Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), mainly throughout a strong and centralised Erasmus + International Credit Mobility (Key Action 107) which took place for one week in Vigo, where around one hundred staff from HEIs in WB develop their professional activity. This paper reports the quantitative and qualitative results of GreenTechWB in terms of impact on individuals and institutions.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 offers an overview of the GreenTechWB project, detailing the partnership composition. The GreenTechWB social network site is detailed in Section 3. Section 4 describes the implementation of the project, the mobilities by academic fields, the research results and the figures related with gender balance. Beyond the implementation and as a measure of the durability of the action, Section 5 describes the general impact on GreenTechWB Beneficiaries and Section 6 the sustainability of the institutional relations among HEIs in the partnership through the implementation of actions under the new Erasmus+ Programme. Finally, Conclusions are included in Section 7.

2. THE PROJECT & THE PARTNERSHIP

The GreenTechWB project (Smart & Green Technologies for Innovative and Sustainable Societies in Western Balkans) was selected in 2014, being one of the 4 projects in Western Balkans that year. With a total of 154 mobility awards, GreenTechWB was a project that covered a big area and mobilities for all the academic levels (undergraduate, master, doctorate, post doctorate and staff). The project aimed at establishing a mobility network involving 8 European partners (from Porto, Paderborn, Ljubljana, Katowice, Split, Sofia and from Spain: Leon and Vigo) and 12 Western Balkans partners (from Albania, Tirana, Vlora, Sarajevo, Mostar, Zenica, Gjilan, Miktrovica, Donja Gorica, Montenegro, Nis and Kragujevac) as Table 1 details.

The GreenTechWB Consortium worked hard to ensure an efficient coordination and decision-making processes, as well as a high degree of trust and communication between the Partners involved in order to achieve a strong, well-organized and healthy cooperation. The partnership counted on more than 50 institutions directly involved in this project. Among the European and Western Balkan partners, and associate's members, we can highlight the presence of senior international technicians with outstanding experience in mobility actions and project development, researchers, quality experts, engineers specialised in different fields, logistic, environmental, technology and biotechnology technicians, business and financial managers. Selected partners and their key staff had all the necessary skills to be an active part to achieve the specific objectives

of the project in the area of Green Technologies. All partners were deeply devoted to the project, and they had extremely strong motivation to lead the project to success. The project was jointly managed by three committees: The Management Board, the Selection Board and the Quality Assurance Board.

Table 1. The partnership

| EU (HEI) | Country | WB (HEI) | Country |
|---------------------------------------|----------|---|------------|
| Uni. Of Vigo (<i>Coordinator</i>) | Spain | Uni. Fan S Noli i Korçë (<i>Co-coordinator</i>) | Albania |
| Uni. of Porto | Portugal | Agricultural Uni. of Tirana | Albania |
| Uni. of Paderborn | Germany | Uni. of Vlora "Ismail Qemali" | Albania |
| Uni. of Ljubljana | Slovenia | Uni. of Sarajevo | Bosnia |
| Uni. of Economics in Katowice | Poland | Dzemat Bijedic Uni. of Mostar | Bosnia |
| Uni. of Split | Croatia | Uni. of Zenica | Bosnia |
| Uni. of Chemical Tech. and Metallurgy | Bulgaria | Public Uni. "Kadri Zeka" | Kosovo |
| Uni. of León | Spain | Uni. of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini" | Kosovo |
| | | Uni. of Donja Gorica | Montenegro |
| | | Uni. of Montenegro | Montenegro |
| | | Uni. of Nis | Serbia |
| | | Uni. of Kragujevac | Serbia |

The **Project management board** was constituted during the first year of the Project and was composed of the Universidade de Vigo (as coordinator of this project): the project coordinator (Prof. Ana Fernández Vilas), a technical general coordinator (Eva Garea Oya), and an academic general coordinator (Prof. Rebeca Díaz Redondo); the University Fan S Noli i Korçë (as joint-coordinator of this project) one administration-technical-financial coordinator (General coordinator); from each European and Western Balkan countries institutions, one general coordinator for administration-financial-quality-followed up issues (General coordinator).

The **management board** decided on the overall guiding principles of the project, on the mobility program details, on the financial organization of the project, organized the student and scholar selection process. It ensured the quality assurance of the programme and constantly monitored the project.

The **selection board**, chaired by the academic general coordinator, was composed of one academic member of each of the partner institutions and was responsible for the selection process. It organized and readjusted the mobility flows so as to fulfill the objectives of the call and the Minimum Requirements for the Selection Procedure. The Selection board guaranteed an impartial and transparent selection process based on merit, providing equal opportunities, gender-balance and participation of disadvantaged people.

Finally, **the Quality Assurance Board** was composed of two members from the Universidade de Vigo (the general coordinator and the technical general coordinator), one member from the Universidade de Leon (in charge of the academic and recognition quality, given its expertise in

this field), one member from the Universidade de Porto, two members from the University Fan S Noli i Korçë (as joint-coordinator of this project) and one member from the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance BiH (as external experts and experts in the Western Balkan area), that prepared a yearly satisfaction report regarding all interested parties (sent/received students, academic, administrative and support staff) and the project adequate execution.

3. THE GreenTechWB SOCIAL NETWORK

An essential asset for the implementation of the project was setting up a specific online social network, GreenTechWB social network (Fig. 1) (<https://social-green-tech-wb.webs.uvigo.es/>), as a tool for all partner universities and our associated members to be in permanent contact. The very same approach was used during the implementation of our previous project EMA2 GreenIT for the benefit of civil society (3772227-1-2012-ES-ERA MUNDUS-EMA21) among EU and North African HEIs [3,4]. As in GreenIT¹⁸, GreenTechWB social network was conceived for three purposes: (i) to support the project management; (ii) to support the communication with applicants and beneficiaries; and (iii) to support an open space for applicants and grantees to share their feelings and opinions. All those tasks were supported by using the key factor in a social network site, the group. Everything exclusively dealt with groups: official groups, created by the project coordinator institution and dynamic groups, created by the subscribers to accomplish their communication needs.

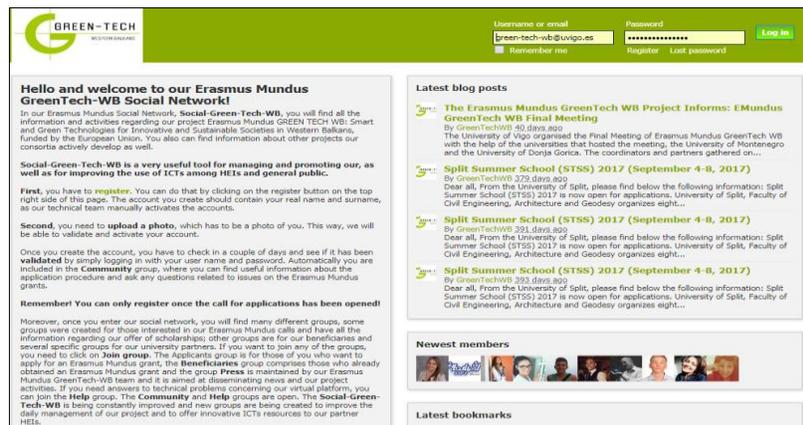


Fig. 1 Homepage of the GreenTECH social network (<https://social-green-tech-wb.webs.uvigo.es/>)

¹⁸ <http://social.emundusgreenit.uvigo.es>

Starting with the official groups, the GreenTechWB social network had one group for the project management that reflected the structure mentioned, a management group composed by a representative of each of the 20 partners in the consortium; a quality group composed by the representatives of the Quality board and an Associates Group for information sharing with associate partners. Additionally, and in order to support all the communications with applicants and beneficiaries, the GreenTechWB social network also had five groups:

- Community group: composed by all the subscribers in the social site. Its main aim was to offer information about the project (available positions, how to apply, needed documents, grants conditions, etc.) for the subscribers to assess if they were interested in applying.
- Applicants group: composed by all subscribers who already intended to apply. Any member of the community group asked for the applicants group membership and, when granted, they had the possibility of applying for the available positions.
- Beneficiaries group: They were classified per cohort (1st cohort, 2nd cohort, 3rd cohort) into three groups for monitoring purposes (surveys, intermediate reports, etc.) dependant on the starting date of the grant.
- Help group: it was conceived as a container of all subscribers' questions.
- Press group: is was devoted to publish news and information regarding the project.

Those groups were the basis of the GreenTechWB project management and monitoring, whose main activity was organized around four communications mechanisms: (i) blogs, used to disseminate information for all the group members; (ii) files, organized in folders, containing relevant information; (iii) the wall, used to share questions and provide useful information for the group members; and (iv) forms, used for formal communications with subscribers. In fact, forms were the mechanism used for subscribers to upload personal data needed at different stages of the grant: for applying, for answer the mandatory surveys, for uploading the intermediate reports, etc. For the project in general, the use of a specific social network site enabled a more efficient way of managing the communications, not only within the partnership but also for the applicants and grantees. The flexibility provided in the GreenTechWB social network, where users were free to create their own groups to share their concerns, opinions and recommendations, boosted the exchange of ideas and clues among both candidates and beneficiaries.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Our mobility plan including 154 grants (28 for Europeans and 125 for WB) was designed around the triangle: cooperation in higher education, research and innovation and under the umbrella of the thematic field Green Technologies. This proposal promoted European HEIs as centres of excellence in learning and research around Green Technologies and drived that excellence to Western Balkan countries in order to contribute to their better governance and social cohesion, as well as to further connect the region to the global economy. The following fields were chosen as a priority Table 2: information and communication technologies, engineering and energy, environmental protection, preservation of cultural landscape, agriculture, food-processing, forestry, mining, business and public administration, law and international relations, languages, tourism and cultural heritage, among others, both to generate the necessary economic growth in the Western Balkans area and also in many EU countries with high unemployment rates. Our main areas of study arose from capacity building in smart & green technologies as enablers for innovative & sustainable societies.

Due to the fact that another essential objective of European development policy in the Western Balkans was the reduction and eradication of poverty and, in parallel, the promotion of good governance and respect for human rights, while preserving the countries identities and traditions for their future possible accession to the EU, the following fields of study and research, public administration, law and international relations, cultural heritage, languages and tourism, mentioned above, were also included in our partnership. As Table 2 shows, the field of study most demanded by the beneficiaries was focused on the Business area (29,87%) followed by the Engineering, Technology (15.58%). 14.93% of the mobilities were limited to the natural science field whereas 12.34% of beneficiaries centered their studies in the social science area.

Table 2 Fields of study

| Fields of study | N° Students | Fields of study | N° Students |
|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| 01,7 Animal Husbandry | 1 | 10,1 Comparative Law, Law with Lang. | 1 |
| 01,9 Others-Agricultural Sciences | 1 | 10,3 Civil Law | 1 |
| 04,2 Business studies with technology | 3 | 10,4 Criminal Law, Criminology | 1 |
| 04,3 Accountancy, financial Mgmt. | 14 | 10,5 Constitutional/Public Law | 2 |
| 04,4 Tourism, catering and hotel Mgmt. | 1 | 10,9 Others-Law | 6 |
| 04,7 Marketing and Sales Mgmt. | 2 | 11,1 Mathematics | 1 |
| 04,9 Others | 26 | 11,3 Informatics, Computer Science | 8 |
| 06,1 Mechanical Engineering | 8 | 13,1 Biology | 2 |
| 06,2 Electrical Engineering | 5 | 13,2 Physics | 4 |
| 06,3 Chemical Engineering | 1 | 13,3 Chemistry | 8 |
| 06,4 Civil Engineering | 1 | 13,4 Microbiology, Biotechnology | 6 |
| 06,5 Electronic Eng. Telecom. | 5 | 13,9 Others-Natural Sciences | 3 |
| 06,9 Others-Eng. Technology | 4 | 14,3 Economics | 10 |
| 07,2 Environ. Sciences, Ecology | 4 | 14,6 Int. Relations, European Studies | 9 |
| 08,3 History | 5 | 15,9 Others-Comm. & Inf. Sciences | 2 |
| 09,1 Modern EC Languages | 4 | | |
| 09,2 General & comparative literature | 1 | | |
| 09,3 Linguistics | 4 | | |

4.1 Mobilities

The GreenWB mobility plan awarded a total of 154 grants at all levels: 57 undergraduates (35,71 %), 32 masters (20,78 %), 22 doctorates (14,29 %), 14 post-doctorates (10,39 %), and 29 staff (18,83 %), which were distributed among countries as Fig. 2 shows with a focus on the promotion of the research development and the transfer of that research with the collaboration of all the member institutions. Research carried out by the staff participating in the project (29 grants for staff) contributed to fostering institutional cooperation, to updating teaching materials, and to the exchange of best practices and their dissemination to improve society needs, in the above-mentioned fields (that are considered a priority in the development strategies for Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia).

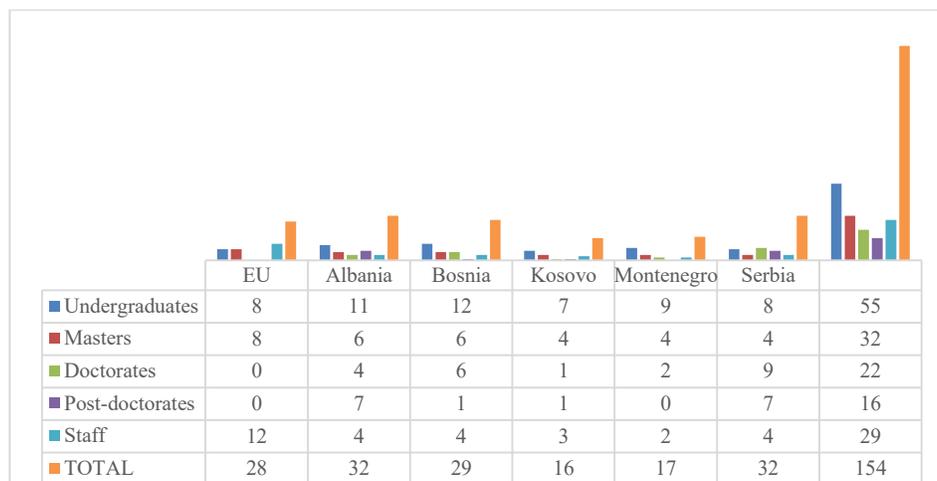


Fig. 2 Distribution of mobilities

In line with the programme's requirement, most of the scholarship holders under this geographical window were selected at undergraduate level. These students constituted 35, 71% of the total mobility flows, followed by master students (20,78%), staff members (18,83%), doctorate candidates (14,29%) and post-doctorates (10,39%). Mobility at all levels was open to individuals both from Western Balkans and the European Union countries. In total, 28 scholarships were granted to the 5 Western Balkans countries with Serbia and Albania being by far the most represented countries (20.78 %) followed by Bosnia (18.83), Montenegro (11.04%) and Kosovo, which has the smallest share, representing only (10.39%) of the scholarships holders (Fig. 3 (a)). On the other hand, the most preferred EU host countries were Spain and Portugal (Fig. 3 (b)).

The mobilities in the project were the seeds for building further collaboration networks between home and host institutions, which eventually supported an improvement in the priority areas that could lead to a real impact in European and partner countries. This action was connected to the final purpose of the mobility plan that was to promote European HEIs as centres of excellence in learning and research around Green Technologies and to move this excellence to Western Balkan countries in order to contribute to their better governance and social cohesion, as well as to further connect the region to the global economy.

Gender balance and inclusiveness was looked for, so that applications from women and from students who were in particularly vulnerable situations were fostered and encouraged. The quality

plan included indicators to make sure there was no discrimination on the basis of ethnic or geographical origin, disability, gender or sexual preference, religion or social origin, political or philosophical conviction. In terms of gender balance, the action achieved an excellent overall result with 59,75% of female and 40,26% of male scholarship holders. It should be noted though that the results vary across the different regions and types of mobility. For instance, female grantees are less represented than men in doctorate and post-doctorate levels, whereas men are underrepresented at undergraduate level (Fig. 4)

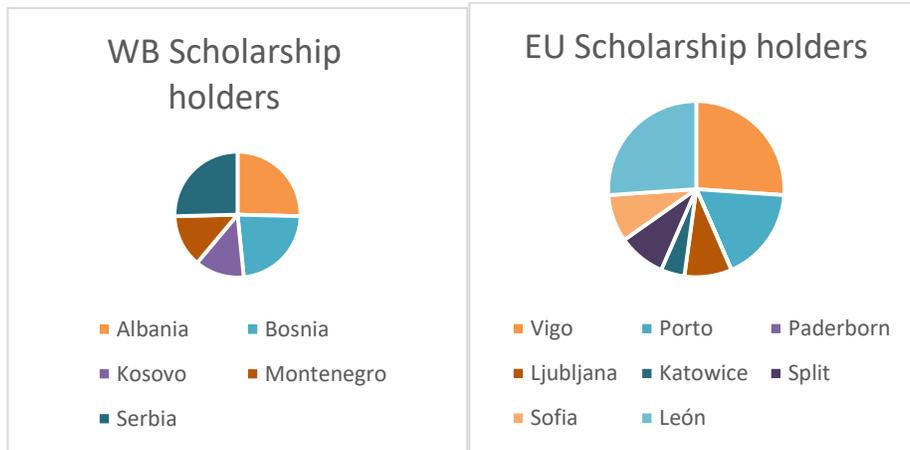


Fig. 3 (a) WB scholarships holders

Fig. 3 (b) EU scholarships holders

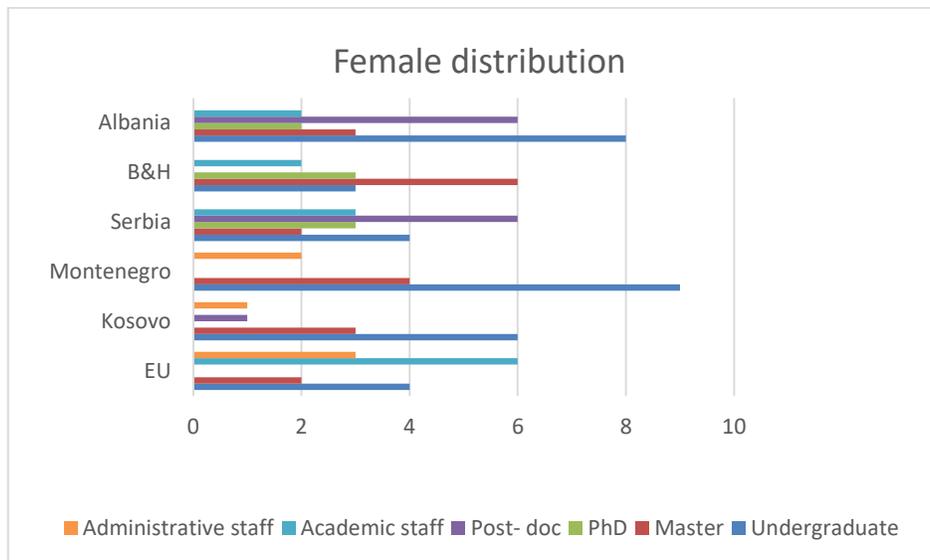


Fig. 4 Gender balance in GreenTechWB

5. IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES

In all Europe and also in the WB there was an increasing demand for energy and more efficient technologies. That is one of the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy: to raise the employment rates, and provide more job opportunities. As regards industrial cooperation in our partner countries, activities focus on trade facilitation for industrial products, innovation and technology transfer and sustainable enterprise development. This scheme made clear a position in favour of research, since more than 75% of mobilities were developed at undergraduate, master and post-doctorate levels. At the end of the project 55 papers were published in different international forums (journals, conferences), distributed according to Fig. 5. Doctorate students carried out the majority of the publications (46.3%). Research in the Green Technologies also constituted remarkable aspect, possibly boosted by the academic areas selected for the project, where continuous publications lead the innovation work.

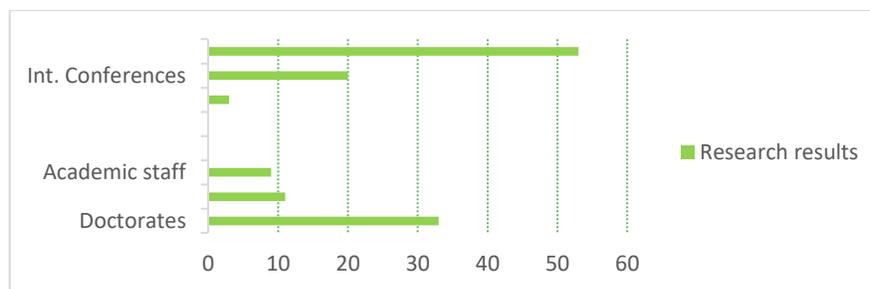


Fig. 5 Research results in GreenTECH

In order to have a follow up on our scholarships grantees, they were asked to fill in a Follow-Up survey. The main objective of the Follow-up Surveys was to comprehend the influence of the Erasmus Mundus GreenTechWB mobility project on the beneficiaries' personal and academic development. It focused on the significance of the exchange for the beneficiaries' employment, while examining if the exchange influences or changes the beneficiaries' career path and whether it instils the wish for further exchanges or work possibilities abroad or in their home country. Regarding the overall experience with the mobility, the results were overwhelmingly positive. This positive opinion can be attributed to the expanded network of collaboration, improvement of teaching and research skills, and personal development as well. Few of the respondents thought the exchange was average. The complaints were either about the bureaucracy with the papers, which means there were too many papers to be filled out before, during, and after mobility, and the language barrier in communication with the Host University and therefore, the professors' inaction with providing additional materials for the foreign students to understand.

With regard to the respondents' current employment status, the majority do not work with the exception of the academic and administrative staff whose mobilities occurred within the scope of their work. However, the unemployment can be attributed to the majority of mobilities lasting for a specific period of time, such as one semester or two, during the academic year. This means the students have not finished their studies yet and are not yet able to embark on their employment journey. All of the respondents of first and second cohort, except the small percentage of those who did not respond to the question, found the mobility either helpful or very helpful in obtaining their current job or any other working or studying opportunities. One of the important factors is the

improvement of a certain foreign language, in most cases the English language, or learning a new language such as Albanian, Bulgarian or Polish, which are not as commonly spoken as English, nevertheless, they can be of great value when applying for a job. The respondents pointed out that such mobilities help with improving or reshaping the methodology of teaching or researching due to the collaboration with professors of different systems, namely European Union and Western Balkans. Some of the students stated also that the mobility helped them to decide whether they should continue studies at all or they should pursue careers in their home country or abroad.

Almost all of the grantees acknowledged that the mobility contributed to the increase of their professional competences and skills. Students found that the greatest achievements attained were linked to their future profession, as they deemed the specific skills and knowledge acquired relevant for their future employment. In fact, they confirmed that the mobility had positive effects on their professional career and on the development of expertise in specific domains requested in the labour market. Similarly, the HEIs responding to the partnership’s survey believed that overall the EMA2 mobility improved the academic and professional performance of students. Mobility also contributed to the students’s personal development by boosting their soft skills and educating them on cultural and linguistic diversity. The grantees could learn from the interaction with individuals from different socio-cultural backgrounds, inside or outside the academic environment. Whereas the grant holders placed intercultural competences, language skills and problem-solving at the forefront of the personal competences acquired, the universities considered that students’ mobility mainly improved their cultural knowledge, communication and social skills and acquired self-confidence [5] (Fig. 9).

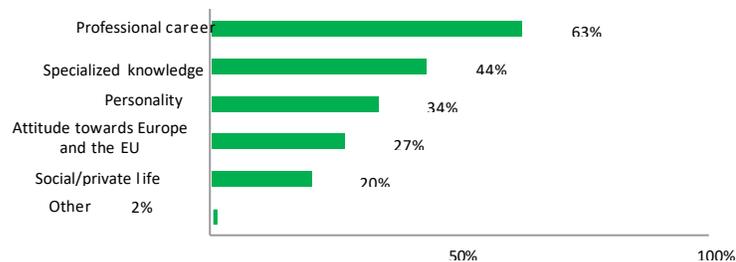


Fig. 9 General impact of EMA2 on students

6. SUSTAINABILITY

More recently, the partnership has agreed to establish in the GreenTechWB Social Network a GreenTechWB Experts Platform for Knowledge Discovery. As a consequence, within the social network GreenTechWB, a specific space was opened, aimed at experts in the Green Tech fields, composed of staff from Western Balkan universities in our partnership and stakeholders from the industrial sector in the local context of HEIs in WBs. This platform gave visibility to the project activities and served as a means of sharing information among all interested parties. The aim was to improve global visibility of talent academics and staff from WBs by incorporating their skills and expertise in an international network. The platform worked as a social and educative ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship that could also facilitate the emergence and development of

business projects. Fostering gender equality and the participation of women in innovation was also possible through the platform.

Although the GreenTechWB project ended on July 2018, our partnership relations are sustained by current collaborations on some of the HEI partners in some KA107 projects and several KA2 projects under the framework defined by the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) [6]. With this programme, new opportunities have emerged, like the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility [7] or the Capacity Building Programme [8]. The former continues with the EMA2 spirit and so promotes mobility between EU and non-EU institutions. The latter maintains the philosophy of the previous Tempus projects and also defends institution building in higher education in non-EU countries and sustainable university partnerships to enhance mutual understanding between the academic worlds of both regions. Sustainability of the links established during EMA2 implementations can be promoted and maintained in the longterm by launching KA107 actions year by year. In this way, the University of Vigo is using the same social-oriented approach (GreenIT and GreenTechWB social network) presented in this paper to support the activities related to this new call. It is especially remarkable for sustainability of the GreenTechWB project, the project KA107 “Academy of Excellence with the Western Balkans”, coordinated by the University of Vigo and involving mobilities with the following countries: BiH, Serbia, Albania and Montenegro). The project comprises mobilities for academic and administrative staff, thus increasing the international cooperation and durable links with the Western Balkans HEIs.

7 Conclusions

After the success of the first EMA2 Social Network GreenIT (between EU and the North of Africa, coordinated by the University of Vigo), the the new GreenTechWB partnership enlarged the GreenIT community to another priority area of the EU: The Western Balkans. More than facilitating the management of mobilities, our social network, that included the platform GreenTechWB Experts Platform for Knowledge Discovery, boosted the intercultural exchange and guaranteed sustainable links among institutions in the partnership, beneficiaries and even applicants of mobilities According to [5], EMA2 had a significant impact on the internationalisation of HEIs in the region and on the development of regional cooperation. It also contributed to the implementation of the Bologna principles in the countries of the Western Balkans. Sustainability was mostly ensured through the establishment of academic bi-or multilateral agreements between EU and Western Balkan partners. Also synergies were created between the different projects in the region by organising joint thematic events to promote scholarship opportunities, discuss recognition and employability issues, identify further cooperation possibilities under Erasmus+ and to share best practices. The success story in GreenTechWB and also the close institutional network resulted from a continuous and dynamic communication all over the life of the project brought up new initiatives which remarked not only the institutional impact but also the sustainability of consolidated institutional bonds.

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