

Newsletter

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## UPDATES FROM HE4u2

The second year of **HE4u2** has started! In this newsletter issue you will find updates on the project activities and steps carried out so far with the aim of **integrating cultural diversity into higher education and make university more accessible and friendly to everyone.**

The **HE4u2** project officially kicked off in January 2016, aiming to contribute to the reform of teaching and learning and to make HEIs more diversified, responsive and competitive. Teachers and educators in HE are the main target group of this project, along with other non-teaching staff connected to migrant learners and learners from ethnic minorities (e.g. counsellors, advice and guidance, learning support staff, mentors, administrators, etc). Migrant learners and learners from ethnic minorities on one side, and policy makers on the other,

represent the other two main target audiences of this project.

[The partnership](#) is made up by [eucen](#) – the European University Continuing Education Network and by 7 higher education institutions from the north, centre and south of Europe, which ensure a wide range of educational culture is included.

The project starts from the awareness of the need for reforming the delivery of teaching and support for **migrant learners**, integrating an intercultural dimension for all learners. Its innovative approach of integrating inclusive pedagogy into existing curricula intends to mediate obstacles for learners from migrant backgrounds and value their contribution to the intercultural dimension for all learners.

## STUDENTS' CONSULTATION

After the first project phase, consisting in the [transversal analysis](#) of [77 pieces of literature](#) and [37 interesting practices](#), the partners engaged with current migrant and ethnic minority learners in the partner institutions through a consultation aimed to identify the most significant features when designing a programme of intercultural support and enrichment of the curriculum.

Each European partner circulated an online questionnaire that principally sought to gather experiences from current migrant students as well as other students from ethnic minority backgrounds. A mixed-methods research approach was adopted meaning both quantitative and qualitative questions were posed. A total of 323 students were consulted.

Overall, there are several themes that emerge across each country's experience as follows:

- Within each survey, students share positive experiences of inclusivity. Two dominant sub-themes were highlighted: the first relates to support services amidst universities specifically designed to cater for the needs of diverse students; the second relates to the individual actions of many of the educators' student's encounter.
- Equally many examples of exclusionary institutional and teaching practices are provided. The majority finding across

surveys is that the materials students encounter on their courses do not reflect their cultural identity and experience. Frequently students refer to an absence of international examples in finance, politics and literature and an absence of a global analysis.

- Each survey also uncovered examples where student experience negative attitudes and racist language whilst attending universities
- Common suggestions for change also emerge. The most notable one is perhaps the **creation of social spaces for intercultural engagement**.

For a detailed account of the consultation results, you are invited to [contact](#) the project coordinators.



## CURRICULA INTERVENTIONS

In the following project phase, each partner set up institutional working groups consisting of teaching, administrative, guidance staff and learner representatives, to work on the design, testing and production of pedagogical interventions. Partners were also encouraged to invite external representatives to enrich working groups. This helped ensuring that the perspective of all main actors concerned was taken into account, enriching the dialogue and exchanges. Each working group identified 3 curricula to work on, at different levels – certificate, short courses, undergraduate courses such as degree programs or post-graduate courses such as masters' programs.

On the base of the results of the consultation and of the transversal analysis of representative literature and practices,

the partners have then designed and tested innovative pedagogical interventions on the selected curricula with the view of improving the teaching strategies and methods in an intercultural perspective. The designed interventions afterwards have been tested in the classrooms.

For a full account of the different pedagogical interventions designed and tested by the partners on the curricula selected, we invite you to [contact us](#).

Do you have any news that could be of interest for the **HE4u2** community?

Please send the posts to the project and we will upload the information in the website! Contact us [at he4u2@eucen.eu](mailto:he4u2@eucen.eu)

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## GUIDELINES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF

The **HE4u2 Guidelines for creating intercultural learning environments** are addressed to staff within higher education institutions and represent one of the major project products. The Guidelines have been produced as the result of the lessons learned through the desk research, the students' consultation and the testing of the pedagogical interventions on the curricula. They are addressed to all staff working in universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) - both Academic and non-Academic. The guidelines are meant to be accessible and

useful to people working in a range of roles and from a range of perspectives. For this reason, some of the sections refer to activities in the classroom/lecture space and are therefore less relevant to administrative and other support staff. Other sections are more relevant to those with responsibility for university communications policies, for organising the physical environment or for coordinating social and cultural events.

The Guidelines will be soon available on the [project website](#) in EN, FR, DE. We invite you to check it out in the coming weeks!

## PROJECT MEETINGS

The second transnational workshop and full partners meeting took place in **Porto, 28-29 November 2016**. The partners were hosted by the Universidade do Porto. The participation of a facilitator, expert in higher education issues, and of the project external evaluator, contributed to enrich the activity with useful insights.

The group will meet again face-to-face in **Thessaloniki, 5-7 September**, for the third planned transnational meeting. Partners will finalise the design of the CPD course for HE staff working with migrant and ethnic minorities and discuss the policy

aspects of the project outcomes. The highlights of this meeting will be explained in the next HE4u2 newsletter.



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## PARTNERSHIP

The **European university continuing education network (eucen)** is the coordinator of **HE4u2**, bringing into the project its long experience in coordinating European projects and its established links with other transnational organisations and networks such as the LLL Platform, EAN, EUA, ESU, etc. The partners are **higher education institutions** that have all been developing relevant actions and policies aimed to widen participation, foster social inclusion and provide support for disadvantaged groups of learners.

**HE4u2** partnership:

- **eucen** (BE)
- Université Catholique de Louvain (BE)
- Maynooth University (IE)
- Turun Yliopisto (FI)
- Universidade do Porto (PT)
- Universität Wien (AT)
- Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz (DE)

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## CONTACT US

If you are interested in our project and you would like to keep informed or get involved in our activities, we invite you to contact us at this email address: [HE4u2@eucen.eu](mailto:HE4u2@eucen.eu)

If you really want to be active in this project, then become an Associate Partner - please let us know and we will contact you to fix the details.