

Respected colleague,

Currently, our university - in collaboration with international partners - prepares an Erasmus+ project submission, focusing on KA2 Capacity Building in higher education.

In this context we work together with key players in the higher education domain in Europe.

With this mail, I ask you for the coordinates of key people in your university that develop and research the topic of teacher education and dealing with children in migration, war and refugee contexts. Involvement of experts is critical to bring together the available expertise of different universities. This will also allow to set up a grounded evaluation of activities described below; and contributes as such to the research domain of your expert staff.

Below you can find a short description of the project outline. More information will be made available through our follow-up email with potential interested staff members of your university.

I look forward to your reply.

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The geographical focus is on Kosovo where tens of thousands of children hardly have access to school due to post-war situations, their refugee status or their unstable migration status.

The project aims at developing capacities in the context of teacher education to cope with the growing demands due to student diversity in general and war refugees and migrants more specifically. Our target

group is primary school children up to lower secondary education. The content focus is on key literacy domains: math, sciences and reading.

In Kosovo, we started up a collaboration with three local universities and three city administrations. The universities comprise of a teacher education department, but need to develop their expertise to tackle the complex problem of developing efficient and effective educational provisions. Especially the fact we have to look for informal and non-formal educational provisions - outside the school context - presents key challenges.

In a partnership with three to four European universities we want to develop the key capacities of teacher educators in these teacher education centres to boost the design, development, implementation and evaluation of such provisions.

The solutions partly build on easy to access and distribute apps that run on cheap phones/tablets and present learning opportunities that will be tracked through learning trajectories. The project does not focus on the design of the technological solutions, the technological tools, or the hardware. Firstly, because open-source solutions will be used. Secondly, the focus of the project is rather on developing the capacities to design learning materials that can be deployed in non-formal and informal solutions (building on e.g., gamification elements, bulletin boards, direct instruction strategies, ...). These learning materials represent key elements of literacy (math, reading, science) that is critical to function in society. Depending on the available solutions, and if relevant, these materials will be distributed through technological solutions. An important phase in the project is the evaluation of the newly developed capacities through the involvement of teachers of the future: student teachers currently enrolled in these three universities. The project will - through the development of the capacities in teacher educators and the

collaborative design and development of materials, broaden the capabilities of these student-teachers with new knowledge and skills and put them in real life informal and non-formal settings to work with the target group of children. This will broaden their competencies that will also benefit the future teaching students in regular formal school settings.

Involving teacher educators is a key choice in view of sustainability of the project and easy dissemination to other national stakeholders and even an international exchange. Through the efforts of these key institutions hundreds of student teachers will get involved in targeted internship activities in local schools. In view of the latter, formal collaboration with city authorities is critical to get access to existing school facilities to set up the non-formal and informal learning programs. In case no schools are available, the authorities take it as their responsibility to provide access at a structural level to facilities that can serve this purpose.

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Kind regards,

dr. Martin Valcke

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