

Editorial

by Aref Alsoufi

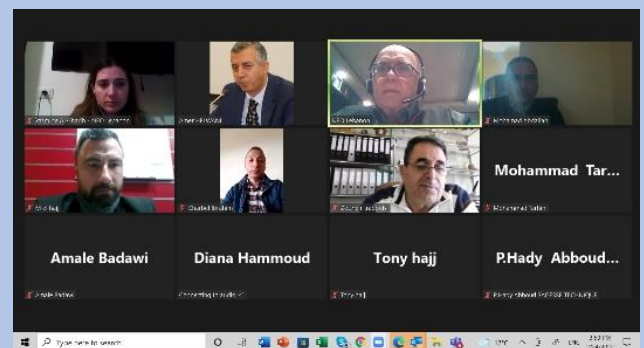
- The Erasmus+ 2022 call for proposals is about to reach the deadlines of its international actions. This first complete call under the new Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 covered the areas of higher education, Vocational Education and Training, and Youth with a diversity of opportunities for institutions, organisations and individuals. The call was launched last November, and candidates were given around 3 months to design and submit their proposals. The NEO Lebanon organised between December and March a series of information and training sessions on the different actions of the call to help potential beneficiaries to take part and submit. We understand the difficult situation in which Lebanese stakeholders are operating and how much they are impacted by the crisis, and we wish the best of luck to those who managed to submit their proposals on time. For those who could not manage it this time, they can be more ready for the next call which is expected to be published in October 2022. Until then, many promotion and training activities will be conducted by our experts.
- Two developments marked the first months of 2022 in the higher education sector: 1) The 5-year higher education plan which is being scrutinised before being announced and made public by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education; and 2) The national consultation on the Lebanese education system launched by the Ministry between February and March with a special focus on obstacles, challenges and possible remediation.
- Down in this edition, we read about a joint venture between Erasmus+ Lebanon and HOPES-LEB project. It consists of a series of dialogue meetings about higher education in times of collapse from the perspective of different stakeholders.
- All of these activities, the ambitious 5-year plan of the Ministry, the national consultation and the interest of the international organisations to support Lebanon might provide a glimpse of hope if the opportunities are not once more missed.

Promotion Events of the Call for proposals

Information and Training sessions on Capacity Building in the fields of Vocational Education and Training and Youth

The National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) of Lebanon continued its information campaign that started in December 2021 following the launching of the 2022 call for proposals under the Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027).

For the first time in Lebanon and since the country becomes newly eligible to participate in the two international actions of Capacity building in the field of Vocational Education and Training (CBVET) and Capacity Building in the field of Youth (CBY), the NEO conducted info-sessions on the two actions of CBVET and CBY on 24 and 25 February 2022 respectively. These info-sessions that gathered newcomers from the fields of



VET and Youth organisations in Lebanon were an opportunity to present an overview of Lebanon’s participation in the Erasmus+ since 2015. The participants were able to learn about CBVET and CBY actions, receive trainings on how to search for partners, get familiar with the Portal dedicated to submit proposals and connect with potential partners from Lebanon.

For more information and useful resources:
 Infosession on CBVET: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/12529>

Infosession on CBY: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/12557>

All international opportunities under Erasmus+ can be found at: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/accessing-erasmus-opportunities-from-outside-the-eu>



Local Events: Joint effort with HOPES-LEB project

Higher Education in times of collapse

HOPES-LEB (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians and vulnerable youth in Lebanon) project in partnership with the **National Erasmus+ Office of Lebanon** has launched the first two dialogues of the series of stakeholder meetings addressing “**Higher Education in times of collapse**”.

The first dialogue on the perspective of higher and further education institutions was conducted virtually on 20 January 2022 and attended by more than 100 participants and speakers including the Director General of Higher Education-per interim, Mr. Fadi Yarak; Higher Education focal point at the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, Ms. Orla Colclough; President of the Lebanese University, Dr. Bassam Badran; Provost of the Lebanese International University, Dr. Ali Tarabay; Deputy Provost of the American University of Beirut, Professor Lina Choueiri; Rector of the Saint Joseph University of Beirut and President of the Universities Association of Lebanon, Father Salim Daccache; Director General of Technical and Vocational Education, Dr. Hanady Berri represented by Mr. Houssam El Hajj.



The second dialogue which looked at the subject from the perspective of project implementers and organisations was conducted on 17 March 2022 in presence of about 70 participants. In this dialogue, presentations were delivered on main challenges encountered during implementation, possible applied mitigation measures and lessons learned by 5 project representatives: Professor Veronique Kazpard, a coordinator at the International Relations Office of the Lebanese University; Dr. Sobhi Abou Chahine, Dean of Student Affairs at Beirut Arab University; Dr. Rima Mattar Deputy President for International Affairs and Global Initiatives at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik; Samer Sfeir, Executive Director of shareQ NGO/ProAble; Assem Chreif, co-founder and head of programmes of the Lebanese Organization for Studies and Trainings (LOST)



These two dialogues brought together professionals and academics, representatives of institutions and organisations and project implementers. The aim is to discuss the current situation of HE sector, the challenges faced in light of the

multiple crises in the country, their approach as institutions, organisations and project implementers to mitigate the impact of these challenges, and their suggestions for future mitigation measures.

The third meeting of this series of dialogues will look at the perspective of the students and planned to take place on 6 May 2022.

Based on a better understanding of the perspectives of the different stakeholders, the initiative aims to develop recommendations which will help relevant stakeholders and policy makers to address the situation accordingly.

For your reference: <https://www.hopes-madad.org/>

For enquiries you can contact the organisers at: lebanon@hopes-madad.org or neo@erasmusplus-lebanon.org

Capacity Building in HE (CBHE) Projects News

Workshop by CBHE project DeCAIR



In the framework of the Erasmus+ CBHE project DeCAIR (Developing Curricula for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics), a workshop was organised on 2 March 2022 about “Collaboration with Industry and Community”.

The project DeCAIR is coordinated by the University of Jordan and includes from Lebanon the Lebanese University and Beirut Arab University and from Jordan the University of Science and Technology and Tafila Technical University. It includes 5 other partners from Greece, Spain, Italy and Germany.

This workshop was an opportunity for the National Erasmus+ Office of Lebanon to present the impact of the EU funded projects, particularly CBHE projects on the higher education sector in Lebanon. This workshop gathered more than 60 participants from academic and socio-economic sector to discuss the collaboration between industry and academia and discuss sustainable approaches to this collaboration.

For further information about the project: <http://decair.ju.edu.jo/Home.aspx>

For your reference, the National Impact study by NEO Lebanon: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/sites/default/files/documents/LB%20National%20Impact%20Study.pdf>

Webinar by CBHE project EduBioMed

The CBHE project EduBioMed (Capacity Building for Education and Applied Research in Mediterranean UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves) organised on 31 January 2022 a webinar on the Tools for Education and Research in and on Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves.

EduBioMed is a multi-country project. It involves from Lebanon: USJ, AUB and the Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa. It involves other partners from Morocco, Spain, France in addition to UNIMED.

NEO Lebanon participated and helped disseminating this event to its relevant contacts at a large scale. The webinar aims at presenting some important tools developed by the project and open resources for Education & Research in Med Biosphere reserves. The webinar was attended by Noeline Raondry Rakotoarisoa, the UNESCO-MAB secretary in addition to the project officer from the EU Commission, and a number of representatives from international NGOs active in the field of Biosphere Reserves.



For further details and resources: <https://www.edubiomed.eu/events/31-january-2022-save-the-date-for-the-webinar-tools-for-education-research-in-on-mediterranean-biosphere-reserves/>

EduBioMed website: <https://www.edubiomed.eu/>

Participation in MEHE Activities

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE LEBANESE EDUCATION SYSTEM

A national consultation on the Lebanese education system was organised jointly by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and the Lebanon Parliamentarian Commission for Education, Higher Education and Culture, between 7 February and 2 March 2022. The discussions, conducted over 4 days, covered the different sectors of the educational system in Lebanon with a focus on the higher education sector and the Lebanese University in particular. The NEO Lebanon participated in 3 of these days and intervened in a special session dedicated to “Supporting the Lebanese Higher Education System” which gathered the Presidents of AUB and LU, the Erasmus+ National Coordinator, the Cooperation Attaché of the French Embassy, the EUD Delegation and the World Bank. The aim of this national consultation is to make a deep diagnosis of the state of play of the Lebanese educational system after the multidimensional collapse and to figure out short-term and mid-term solutions to overcome the crisis and mitigate its consequences.

LEBANON FIVE-YEAR HIGHER EDUCATION PLAN, 2022-2026

The Minister of Education and Higher Education, Professor Abbas AL Halabi has already launched the preparatory phase for making public the Lebanon higher education 5-year strategic plan 2022-2026. A campaign of consultation is planned to be conducted. The 5-year plan is supported by UNESCO and drafted by experts from Europe and Lebanon.

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