

NEWSLETTER 5 [OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2020]

Editorial

The National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) of Lebanon continues its online activities in full respect to the lockdown forced by the pandemic. Although the charm of the face-to-face meetings is being lost, the virtual communication has proved to be more frequent and in some cases equally efficient and productive.

The major activities carried out by the NEO have been focusing on monitoring ongoing capacity building and International credit mobility projects running in different Lebanese universities. The NEO has been assisting projects during their implementation by providing advice and responding to their queries. The main difficulty that is challenging ongoing projects is the financial implementation which has been considerably obstructed by the continuing severe measures taken by the Lebanese banks. This has led the NEO in collaboration with the Executive Agency of the EU Commission to work out a set of 'suggestions and advices' that can help projects to mitigate the consequences of these measures by introducing more flexibility in the financial practices. The main advice spelled out by these 'suggestions' is the encouragement of all Lebanese HEIs partnering in Erasmus+ projects to use bank accounts opened in foreign countries for their financial transactions.

As the Erasmus+ generation 2015-2020 is shutting down and a new one will start soon for 2021-2027, and at this bridging phase, the NEO is preparing a national study to be submitted to Brussels on the impact of the CBHE projects implemented in Lebanon with all challenges met and lessons learned.

Until we come back in 2021 with a new look, the NEO wishes all its readers and colleagues a safe exit from this painful pandemic, a warm peaceful Christmas and a new year full of hope....

Best wishes for the New Year!

On behalf of the NEO Lebanon Family

Dr. Aref Alsoufi



National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon,
5th. Floor,
Ministry of Education and Higher Education,
Habib Abi Chahfa Sq. (Unesco Palace Area)
Beirut - Lebanon

Tel. +961-3-654 180

Fax: +961-1-804 310

www.erasmusplus-lebanon.org

The National Erasmus+ Office NEO
Lebanon is represented by Dr. Aref Alsoufi.

Funding Source: This Newsletter has been funded within the framework of the European Union Erasmus+ programme.

Disclaimer: This Newsletter reflects the views only of the authors, and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Commission welcomes political agreement on Erasmus+

On December 11, 2020, the Commission has welcomed the political agreement reached between the European Parliament and EU Member States on the new Erasmus+ Programme (2021-2027). Trilogue negotiations have been concluded, pending the final approval of the legal texts by the European Parliament and the Council.

Both, the Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel explained the importance of Erasmus+ programme to the future of European people and societies, and how this programme had contributed to better lives socially and professionally.

[Erasmus+](#) is a real European success story, consistently identified as one of the most successful initiatives of the EU. Since its inception in 1987, the programme has expanded considerably. It now covers all education and training sectors ranging from early childhood education and care, and school education to vocational education and training, higher education and adult learning. It supports cooperation on youth policy and promotes participation in sport.

The new programme has dedicated a budget of more than €26 billion for the period 2021-2027. It will not only be more inclusive and innovative but also more digital and greener. It will be key to achieving the European Education Area by 2025 and will mobilise the education, training, youth and sport sectors for swift recovery and future growth. It will provide many new opportunities for Europe's learners. With increased accessibility and more flexible mobility formats, it will provide opportunities to a more diverse group of learners. It will offer new opportunities for cooperation, innovation in curriculum design, learning and teaching practices, and will promote both green and digital skills. It will also support new flagship initiatives, such as European Universities, Erasmus Teacher Academies, Centres of Vocational Excellence and DiscoverEU.

For More Information

[Erasmus+](#)

[Recovery plan](#)

[2021-2027 long-term EU budget & Next Generation EU](#)



NEO NEWS

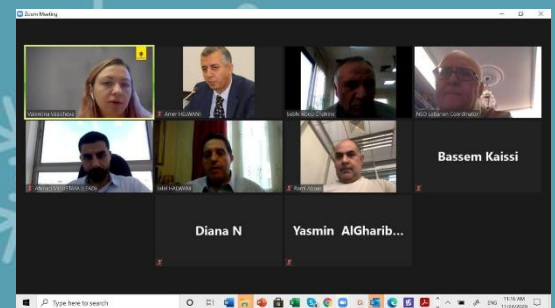
Monitoring Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) projects

1- Monitoring visit to CBHE project ICU-RERE

A monitoring visit to the CBHE project ICU-RERE "Knowledge Triangle, Reinforcing of Education - Research E-Health & Medical Links" was conducted on November 24, 2020 through Zoom platform.

This project aims to reinforce and modernise experiential education in health sciences curricula, introduce inter-professional teaching and learning activities and inter-professional collaboration student-led clinics (ICPC); provide comprehensive services to socioeconomically disadvantaged, poor and elderly patients by multiple health providers; improve the efficiency of the healthcare system, work environments, and patient safety outcomes; enhance the teaching competency development of academic staff and teacher practitioners/clinician educators, develop web platform for collaboration in development and commercialisation of innovative PHC system and tools.

This monitoring visit was an occasion for the team to meet representatives from the Lebanese partners (BAU, MUBS, UL and Lead Healthcare Consultancy) and from the Coordinating institutions of the project (Linnaeus University, Sweden) to learn more about the progress made by the project and its results achieved so far.



For more info: <https://www.icurere.com/>

2- Monitoring visit to CBHE project Demos

A monitoring visit to the CBHE project Demos "Master Degree in Democratic Governance and Human Rights" was conducted on October 26, 2020 through Zoom. The project is coordinated by Université Moulay Ismail in Morocco.

This project aims at supporting the modernisation and internationalisation of democratisation studies in Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia; addressing the needs in their HE systems in the field of social and behavioural science; contributing to closer cooperation between EU and partner countries; building capacity for the master graduates in the area of civic and democracy education; educating high-level professionals in the field of human rights and democratisation.

This monitoring visit was an occasion for the team to meet representatives from the Lebanese partners (Lebanese University and Antonine University) and to learn more about the progress made by the project and its results achieved so far.

3- Monitoring visit to CBHE project DIGIHEALTH

A monitoring visit to the CBHE funded project DIGIHEALTH "Innovative DIGItal skills & teaching methods 4 eEffective health educaTion in Lebanon & Syria" was conducted on November 2, 2020 through Zoom. This project is coordinated by Linnaeus University, Sweden.

DIGIHEALTH project aims at promoting excellence, creative and innovative digital teaching and learning approaches through advanced ICT solutions to improve the quality of higher education to prepare a well-qualified graduates who are able to adapt to changing healthcare environment, meet societal expectations and sustain healthy environment in Lebanon and Syria.

This monitoring visit was an occasion for the team to meet representatives from the Lebanese universities (LU, BAU, MUBS, LIU), Syrian and European partners and to learn more about the progress made by the project and its results achieved so far.



For more info: <http://digihealth-eu.aiu.edu.sy/home>

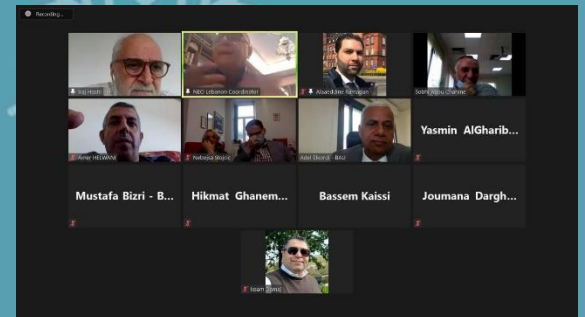
4- Monitoring visit to CBHE project ELEGANT

A monitoring visit to the CBHE project ELEGANT "Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Graduate Employability through University - Enterprise Cooperation" was conducted on October 12, 2020 through Zoom.

ELEGANT project aims to enhance university enterprise cooperation in Jordan and Lebanon in order to improve teaching and learning in partner universities, enhance the employability of graduates and create conditions for applied research cooperation and knowledge transfer between partner universities and enterprises.

ELEGANT is a 3-year regional project, coordinated by Sveuciliste university Dubrovniku, Croatia and involves from Lebanon: BAU, MUBS and the Syndicate of Computer Science SCSL; and other partners from UK, Italy and Jordan.

This monitoring visit was an occasion for the team to meet representatives from the Lebanese and EU partners and to learn more about the progress made by the project and its results achieved so far.



For more info: <https://www.elegant-project.eu/>

5- Impact monitoring visit to CBHE project EuNIT

An impact monitoring visit to the CBHE project EuNIT " European project design and management In the South Mediterranean region" was conducted on December 17, 2020 through Zoom. This project generally aims at enabling South Mediterranean Partner Country HEIs to build durable international partnerships and maximise their internationalisation efforts through promoting EU project design and management. The project was coordinated by University of Aix-Marseille, France. It included partners from Libya, Jordan and Lebanon (Antonine University, University of Balamand and Saint Joseph University).



For more info : <https://www.eunitproject.eu/>

CBHE Projects Activities

1- a) MED2IaH CB project: Panel Discussion

NEO participated in panel Discussion entitled: "Online Education to Strengthen Internationalisation" co-organised by the Erasmus+ Capacity Building project MED2IaH held on Friday 23 Oct CEST via Zoom. The panel included speakers from the consortium of the project- from all 5 MED countries.

The main purpose of this event was to discuss topics that is in the focus of the project, to raise awareness within all partner universities (management, academic and administrative staff, students) and other universities in MED countries.

The MED2IaH initiative stems from the necessity to cover an important aspect of internationalisation in Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan) higher education system that has not been tackled adequately until now - Internationalisation at Home (IaH). This project is coordinated by the Euro- Mediterranean University (EMUNI), Slovenia.



b) MED2IaH CB project: 5th consortium meeting

NEO Lebanon participated in the fifth consortium meeting held remotely by the Erasmus+ Capacity Building project MED2IaH on December 16, 2020. Besides discussing management issues, progress, delays and future activities, the meeting was extended for the Lebanese partners to discuss alongside the project Coordinator and NEO Lebanon the financial advices approved by EACEA. 28 participants from all partner institutions and members from NEO Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco attended the meeting.

2- Webinars under ELEGANT CB project

NEO participated in 3 webinars under the Erasmus+ CBHE project ELEGANT.

- The first was organised by MUBS on September 23, 2020 entitled "Enhancing IT Graduates Employability through Skills Development & Curricular Innovation". Up to 100 participants attended the webinar.
- The second was also organised by MUBS on November 11, 2020 entitled "Recent Trends in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning". There were 16 experts in the field of Artificial Intelligence from Lebanon, Arab and European countries speaking at the webinar. Around 100 participants attended the webinar.
- The third was organised by BAU on November 25, 2020 entitled "Modern Cybersecurity: Educational and Technical Perspectives". Fifteen national and international speakers participated with up to 150 attendees.



For more info: <https://www.elegant-project.eu/>

Monitoring International Credit Mobility (ICM) projects

1- Monitoring ICM at MUBS

The National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon conducted an ICM monitoring via Zoom to the Modern University for Business and Science on October 5, 2020. The coordinator for mobilities has been met. This meeting enabled the NEO to have a better understanding of the management system of ICM at the university, link to internationalisation strategy, policies at the university level pertaining to ICM, organisation of mobilities, selection process of students and staff, recognition process, dissemination of the experience etc. Testimony from a student who underwent a mobility was also presented during the meeting.



2- Monitoring ICM at BAU, USEK, USJ

NEO conducted three other ICM monitoring virtual visits to BAU, USEK, USJ, on December 1, November 20, October 28 respectively. Besides learning about the management system of ICM, policies at the university pertaining to ICM, selection and recognition processes, dissemination of ICM and other issues, NEO was able to meet students, academic and administrative staff beneficiaries and listen to their testimonials.



Financial advices meeting for CBHE projects with Lebanon

The National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon organised a webinar on December 15, 2020 for all CBHE projects having partners from Lebanon since the year 2017. The aim of the webinar was to discuss the Financial suggestions legally approved by the EU Commission and especially for Lebanon in the context of its current financial crisis.

The different financial suggestions were presented and explained followed by an extensive discussion and Q&A session between the projects and the NEO. All questions have been addressed, and the NEO showed willingness to tackle related issues on a case-by-case basis in subsequent meetings. The main message that was conveyed to Lebanese HEIs partnering in CBHE projects is to use bank accounts opened outside Lebanon for the management of their project activities. Other flexibility in the disbursement of funds was also introduced.

A total of 42 participants from Lebanon and EU institutions attended the webinar.

HERE NEWS

(Higher Education Reform Experts)

Webinar on European Student Card

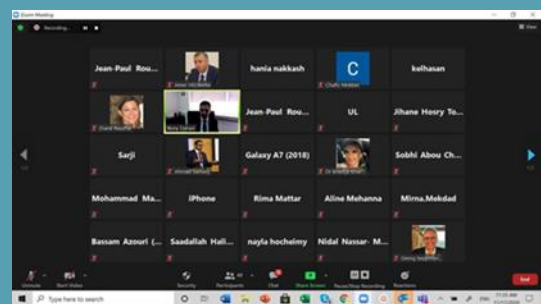
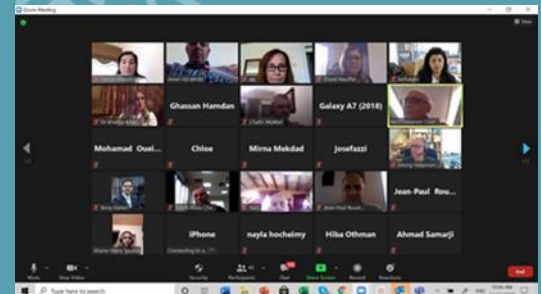
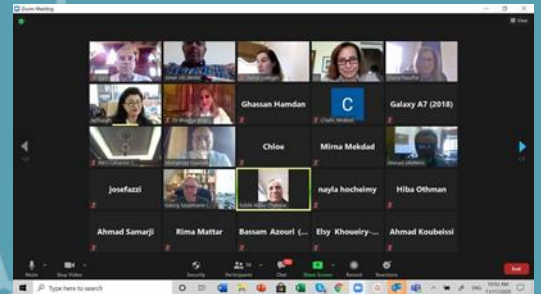
In the framework of the Erasmus+ Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE) activities, a webinar on “European Student Card” was organised on Tuesday, 17 November 2020 via Zoom platform.

This event was organised by the EU Erasmus+ programme, as part of a series of events that contribute to higher education reform at national level.

The webinar aimed to bring together policy makers and experts from higher education to openly discuss and assess the “European Student Card” (ESC) as a tool to promote transparency and to facilitate recognition and mobility. The meeting explored the opportunities of developing a digital infrastructure inspired by the ESC system which can form a structuring vector to enhance transparency, to promote evidence-informed decision making and to move towards digital-aided management of the learning.

Jean-Paul Roumegas, the coordinator of the ESC project and the Counsellor for international relations and partnerships at CNOUS France, participated as a key speaker and moderated the debates on the impact of students’ cards on the sector.

For more information about the event and its presentations you can consult: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/8784>



Regional Webinar on Quality Assurance

“Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Institutional evaluation and accreditation”

A regional webinar was organised on December 3, 2020 by the Erasmus+ Offices of Morocco and Tunisia. Experts from both countries and from the region have participated. Dr. Nada Moghaizel Nasr and Dr. Chafic Mokbel took part from Lebanon. Around three hundred persons participated in this webinar.

A keynote speech was delivered by the European expert Fabrice Henard who shed light on the latest developments in the Quality Assurance domain. This was followed by presenting several experiences from Morocco and Tunisia.

From Lebanon, two presentations were delivered:

Dr. Nada Moghaizel-Nasr, who led the accreditation and quality assurance process at Saint Joseph University in Beirut and who participated in the institutional evaluation of several European universities, presented some recommendations so that institutional accreditation and evaluation become levers of development. She also presented the digital platform conceived by her university in order to facilitate this process. Based on her experience, she also explained how this process had positively impacted a student centered pedagogy in her university, pillar of quality culture in higher education institutions. She concluded that this way of piloting the evaluation process leads to many “silent transformations” and strengthens a quality culture based on continuous evaluation and improvements.

Dr. Chafic Mokbel summarised ten years of experience in quality assurance especially within the two projects: Tempus TLQAA and Erasmus+ TLQAA+. The projects have permitted to construct all components, tools and procedures for institutional and programmatic evaluation and quality assurance. Capacity has been built with a pool of more than eighty experts in quality assurance trained. The presentation stresses on the balances that a QA system must consider with care while noting that a balance is not a choice. Details have been provided about several balances: accountability vs continuous improvement, internal QA vs external evaluation, institutional vs programmatic, quality assurance vs relevance, norms vs standards, local vs external reviewers, authorities-institutions-agencies, and system-standards-experts. The presentation also showed the ten reference points for the creation of a QA agency in the domain of higher education as defined by Tempus TLQAA.

The links to the webinar and its presentations can be found on the following website:

<https://erasmusplus.ma/seminaire-regional/>

The seminar can also be viewed on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4ybcBH3hbo&t=19s>

SPHERE NEWS

(Support and promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts)

Exploring micro-credentials: Why, how and which way forward

An Online Seminar on “Exploring micro-credentials: Why, how and which way forward” was organised by SPHERE on 26-27 November 2020. Two members from HERE Lebanon, Dr. Diane Nauffal and Dr. Pierre Gedeon, attended the webinar and disseminated the outcomes of this seminar at the LEBTECH event organised by the Lebanese IT syndicate on Saturday November 28, 2020

The learning outcomes of this event were:

- Get acquainted with different definitions and models of micro-credentials;
- Understand how micro-credentials are used in practice, including recognition of learning, options to build them into degrees etc.;
- Understand the potential benefits of micro-credentials for employers and students;
- Understand the perspectives of learners, employers, institutional providers and teachers so as to anticipate questions and obstacles in delivering them and ensuring their recognition and quality;
- With examples of the European developments, explore the policy discussion on flexible learning of higher education through different formats of delivery, and different learning purposes;
- Develop an understanding how micro-credentials could be used in one’s own institution or system, and what would be the opportunities and challenges.

What are micro-credentials?

- They are shorter units of learning, usually enabling the learner to achieve a particular skill or ability. This would distinguish them from Bachelor or Master programmes. In many instances, they may be used as a tool for lifelong learning, reskilling or ‘upskilling’.
- They may be provided by higher education institutions, but also vocational or adult learning. They are offered online, or in blended mode, but they can also be provided physically.
- They do not always result into a certificate - a “micro-credential” - but many do. In this sense, many require registration and usually also a fee. This helps to distinguish them from MOOCs and other open learning offers. On the other hand, one should leave aside any certificates or badges which one can achieve through (active) participation in an event (seminar, conference) or a one-off training event.
- There is currently no commonly agreed definition (though many are being proposed) and they may exist in very different formats. They also may or may not be called micro-credentials at this stage.

For more information about the subject you can visit the website of the event at :

<https://supporthere.org/micro-credentials>.

#ERASMUSDAYS 2020

Assaad Akl, the winner of the best “Photo&Story” for #ERASMUSDAYS2020 from Antonine University (AU), receiving his award from the National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon.

#ErasmusDays is an international celebration where a series of events are organised by different players of the Erasmus+ programme. The aim of #ErasmusDays is to share beneficiaries’ experiences in mobilities, communicate results of Erasmus+ projects and be visible to people, professionals, media, policy makers ...

#ErasmusDays2020 took place on **15, 16 and 17 October**. NEO Lebanon took part in the 2020 edition of #ErasmusDays with an activity entitled “Photo & Story”.

Beneficiaries were simply asked to post one picture that is related to their Erasmus+ experience with an interesting/remarkable story behind it.

Thanks to all students who have contributed to #ERASMUSDAYS 2020



- END -