CURE   Co-funded by the
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Dear Rhonda,

As part of our on-going monitoring of Erasmus+: Capacity-Building in Higher Education projects in the Partner Countries, Mrs Keren Sasson , Coordinator of the National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) in Israel, carried out a field monitoring visit of your project at Sapir Academic College, on 21 November 2018.

We would like to thank all participants in the field monitoring visit from Gordon Academic Collee of Education, Academic College of Education Givat Washington, the David Yellin Academic College of Education and the College of Sakhnin for Teacher Education for the time they devoted to the discussions and for having provided updated information on the project implementation.

It has become apparent from the monitoring visit, that progress has been made in the following areas;

- The project has completed most of its set goals and work-plan and is now entering the final year of implementation. Most activities were conducted on time and according to the schedule though one major delay has occurred and that was with the implementation of the SMS activities, due to a very late distribution of the SMS forms by Brussels and then the complications of having the bilateral agreements signed by the partners. This all caused a one-year delay and a need to redesign the training activities. The partners managed to resolve this issue and create a successful training work-plan, which will continue in the final year of the project.
- The project has designed tangible and sustainable outputs such as the courses which were designed in a modular way to assist their implementation, which proved to be a good strategy, and the different training sessions and centers for civic involvement.
- The project has impacted all participants in the project but needs to focus on the external dissemination efforts in this point in time.
- The project involves students in development activities who proved to be very helpful for the process and in promoting change in campuses to increase awareness of civic issues and promote civic involvement of students within their campus and society. The development stage was constructed out of 3 stages. During the first stage, the teams worked on "constructing a dynamic program and strategies that promote curricular reform for civic education" (WP2.1). This stage included the design and development of course methodology, content and structure. It also included development of 5 SMS workshops for faculty, development of programs for student activities and plans for Civic Centers on campus and development of workshop for in-service teachers. The second stage was to implement and pilot the developed courses (WP2.2), workshops and student activities. The courses were designed in a modular manner to assist faculty to only implement relevant topics into their current courses. Faculty could take an entire designed course if they wished but it would have been harder to implement, as usually new full courses are difficult to find space in a running academic program. As such, it makes more sense, as was learned by the partners in previous CD projects, to develop courses that are constructed out of several modules to be implemented within an existing course. This proved to be a very helpful tool as the project expected to be piloting 40 courses but turned out to pilot different modules in more than 80 existing courses. This extensive outreach of pilots made the partners gather a lot of

information about the design and content of the courses, feedback from students and stuff, and thus were able to make changes and improve the courses.

The partners also selected students from each institution to undergo a Civic Leadership training developed by the project to train student to become leaders in their campuses of civic involvement and training of other students to establish civic activities and implement civic culture. The students have led projects and activities within their campuses such as dialogues and debates on social issues, activities devoted to promoting knowledge and understanding of other cultures, etc. Although in most partner institutions civic activities were already being held in one way or another, civic activities within the campuses and the civic involvement of the students have increased it the campuses. Although it is difficult to clearly establish a direct connection between this increase to the CURE project, the project has made a difference in the structural manner of these activities, i.e. that they are now part of newly established Centers for Civic Involvement. Furthermore, the partners attests that a new jargon, promoted by the CURE project, can be heard amongst faculty and students, even though they themselves will not be able to link this to the project.

Workshops for in-service teachers have also been piloted during which the courses and their individual modules were taught and discussed and tools on how to implement them were given to participants. The feedback received from the participants is that the courses developed are very easy to implement and that they plan to do so. It is recommended to the partners to follow this issue and go back to the participants a few months after the workshop in order to see if they actually implemented the modules in their classrooms. This will provide evidence on the impact of the project but will also serve as reminder to those teachers who were interested in implementing the modules but for some reason or another, have yet to do so. The partners also mentioned that in some occasions they were approached by municipal supervisor's in-charge of education, after hearing about the trainings, to hold the workshop for the teachers in their municipal schools.

Stage three of development focused on Developing CURE's On-Line Platforms (WP2.3). This stage has accomplished most of the activities during which the partners have designed CURE's online platform for uploading all courses and other project materials for dissemination and exploitation. The platform also includes an internal platform designed on the basis of the Moodle platform to serve the partners with internal discussions and management of the project. The platform also includes an Educators' Personal Areas where CURE's faculty have developed personal pages and uploaded professional materials in order to facilitate collaborative work and the development of new initiatives. This activity is still in progress as not all faculty have used this personal area and the coordinator has states her intent to encourage the entire consortium to utilize this option in order to reach its potential.

- The coordinator is very experienced and is managing the project in a decentralized manner, establishing open communication and high ownership of the partners. The coordinator met with senior management of all partners, in IL and in GE, the Ministry of Education and the staff from the institutions to be part of the project.

- Partners work extremely well together and consider themselves as family. Many plans for new academic cooperation and research between the partners are underway.

Please find below the main recommendations and comments from the visit, which should be taken into consideration during the rest of the implementation of the project:

- The project is now in a critical time where external dissemination is very important and more emphasis should be given to this. Our recommendation is to act more proactively and hold training sessions and workshops to target specifically faculty from other HEIs.

- We thank you for your patience and perseverance with the SMS tool. In case of problems, we recommend that you contact the EACEA for assistance.

We kindly ask you to actively follow these recommendations and to provide us with information in your next report on how you have addressed these issues.

Please share this feedback with your project partners, and do not hesitate to contact us or the National Erasmus+ Office in Israel (in copy of this e-mail) should you need any further clarifications.

We thank you for your commitment and wish you a successful continuation of your project activities.

Best regards,

Róisín Mc Cabe

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