

**Partnership  
Experiential  
Knowledge**



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**Erasmus international partnership**

**Experiential Knowledge and Experiential Learning in Higher Education**

***A new dimension in personalized inclusive education***

## Welcome to the first newsletter!

The first year of the project which commenced in December 2021 got off to a great start when all eight countries came together for the first transnational meeting. Hosted by the University of Agdar in Norway we met over two days online – unfortunately covid restrictions prevented travel – to discuss and clarify our work packages as follows;

1. Key educational principles (including ethical principles) for the integration of experiential knowledge and service users in personalised inclusive education. These principles are reflected in all the activities and outputs. *Italy*
2. Guide with didactical and pedagogical methods / set of tools pertaining to experiential knowledge as part of personalised inclusive learning: gap mending courses and other methods of integrating / developing experiential knowledge. *Netherlands*
3. Training programme and coaching package for lecturers, in which they can develop competencies to support students on their individual learning path, focusing on the use and development of experiential knowledge, including how to achieve a full and equal integration of service users in educational programs. *Lithuania*
4. A support kit for experts by experience, supporting them to be co-lecturer. *Belgium*
5. Framework for integrating experiential knowledge, experiential learning, and user involvement in curricula of Social Work and Nursing Education. *Norway*
6. Repository and website - digital forum with state-of-the-art literature, overview of good practices and other outputs of the project. *Sweden and UK*
7. Monitoring and evaluation *Spain*

By the time of our second transnational meeting, we could travel and had much to share over two days at the most beautiful Catholic University of Milan. Although it was a little alarming to arrive during celebrations of Milan's biggest football win in over a decade, the calm university environment in contrast to all night fireworks and police sirens, provided a colourful and peaceful context.



Here is a summary of work package progress.

**Work package 1** is focused on the elaboration of Key principles to integrate experiential knowledge in Social work and Nursing education programs.

Through a joint reflection with all partners in the second transnational meeting, currently we have developed a first draft of the document about key principles; it will be further discussed and elaborated in the next months through different actions, also involving in group discussion meetings educators, students and people 'Experts by experience' from each partner institution.

The key principles document will be supported also by other products, both scientific than informative.

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**Work package 2** is a joined effort of Windesheim and HU University of applied sciences;  
**Inspiration for education**

Our focus is on gathering information on all the activities, courses and approaches in social work and nursing education of the partners involved, that include experiential knowledge. The goal is to make this information accessible for lecturers and educators through our digital toolbox/ on our website for inspiration or implementation in their own social work or nursing educational programs. The challenge is to gather the necessary information and materials in such a way that it's useful, inspiring and accessible.

At the moment we have defined the topics that should be included in a description of activities, courses or approaches, and put them together in a format. Examples of elements are: learning goal/outcome, general description, used theories and conditions (such as a lecturer with experiential knowledge) and practical requirements (such as available materials, type of learning environment, etc.).

Currently our partners are working hard to describe their examples according to this format. In the spring of 2023 we hope to present a concept guide with inspiring didactical examples on different levels which have experiential knowledge included.

If you would you like to know more please contact Rosalie Metze or Sascha van Gijzel.  
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**Work Package 3** is responsible for the development of the Training programme for lecturers aiming to support them in implementing fundamental principles, didactical and pedagogical methods integrating experiential knowledge during their teaching. Colleagues from Vilnius University prepared a basic structure and outline of the programme, which was discussed with all partners, with feedback collected. It was also agreed that colleagues from Vilnius University, Tartu University and Applied Science University in Windesheim would work together on the first draft of the programme. Partners from Applied Science University in Windesheim already have relevant experience in preparing and delivering training programmes for lecturers aiming to support them in integrating experts by experience into the study process of social workers. Colleagues from Vilnius University have expertise in using methods of experiential learning or learning from the experience. These and other experiences are central to drafting the programme.

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In **work package 4** the University College Limburg-Leuven (UCLL) and the Karel de Grote University College (KdG) work together on the development of a toolkit for the support of service users and students to integrate their experiential knowledge in higher education. In this spring we organised focus groups of Experts by experience and students with experiential knowledge to identify the conditions and opportunities for working with experiences in higher education. We did an exploration of some good practices in Flanders and the Netherlands: the education for people living in poverty and with experience in social exclusion (De Link - Belgium), the education for people with experience in mental health care (UCLL), the programmes for experts by experience in social work education (Utrecht – Windesheim). Based on this knowledge, we will develop a first draft of an educational/training program for experts by experience, that we will present in Spain. We organise a try out in UCLL in autumn 2022.

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In **Work Package 5** we are looking into the organizational frames for experiential learning. This spring (2022) we arranged two workshops, one for students and one for service-user organizations and experts by experience. The aim of these workshops was to discuss frameworks that encourage experiential learning for the students, and to explore what kind of organizational support experts by experience and service user organizations need in their cooperation with the

University. Based on these workshops we developed three surveys, one for the students, one for experts by experience who have cooperated in education, and one for service-user organizations.

The transnational meeting in Milan in May gave us the opportunity to present the survey, where we received helpful feedback including one suggestion that we also should make a survey directed to the teachers. We ran out of time in Milan, and wish we had more time to discuss the survey and the questions. (Great thanks to Helen, who did a great job correcting the English language in the survey).

In the planning-process, we had hoped to get the survey out to students and expert by experiences in the spring, but we have realised that it takes time to make a good survey, and we hope to get it out during this autumn. The next step is to work with the questions for the teachers. In September, the project will be discussed in an intern research-group, and we hope to get some input on questions for teachers according to experiential learning here.

Hopefully all the surveys will be distributed to you before the next transnational meeting in Spain in October.

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**Work package 6** has a lead role with developing the digital platform for presenting the project findings and resources as well as supporting and overseeing its development. We were able to share some of our experiences developing PowerUs and co-facilitating gap mending projects. This initiated a useful debate about where to locate and raise the profile of the Erasmus partnership project. One option was to create a new website however we agreed that the best option would be to build on the success of the PowerUs website that already has a lot of international interest. As partners with key global organisations such as the International and European Associations of social work we have an established platform to promote the project. We benefitted from coming together in Milan to have this and many other useful discussions. One other included how to gather information from everyone to conduct a literature review. It was very useful to discuss the template created by Susan (Dundee University, Scotland UK) of the type of review we are conducting and types of literature and research to include. We place a lot of emphasis on resources that come from experiential knowledge. Having recently completed PHD's both Cecilia (Lund University, Sweden) and Helen (Open University UK) gave brief presentation of their thesis, strengthening the research basis for gap mending/ emancipatory practice. We look forward to working with everyone and are happy to provide support wherever we can.

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**Work package 7.** The University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM) team is formed by researchers of two Faculties of Nursing from two university campuses, Talavera de la Reina and Albacete of UCLM. University of Castilla-La Mancha is a public multidisciplinary institution of higher education in the region of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain) and has five campuses across the region (Albacete, Ciudad Real, Cuenca, Talavera de la Reina and Toledo). In both Faculties (Albacete and Talavera de la Reina), we have experiences following experiential knowledge. Thus, we have worked on different projects that use experiential knowledge. In these experiences, nursing students are part of initiatives with service user organisations, educational organisations, etc. to increase students' knowledge in health taking into account all the aspects that can influence it at a social, cultural or

psychosocial level. Thereby, our students improve their skills in health promotion and health education focus on the participants. On the other hand, the participants increase their empowerment.

Our focus is on monitoring and evaluation of the project activities, the tools of the other work packages and the education practices. The first face to face meeting of the project in Milan was great for sharing experiences and ideas. We felt much clearer about the objectives and tasks that we must carry out in each work package. Finally, we can't forget the beautiful place of Milano, its University of Sacro Cuore and the excellent work done by Elena, Camila and the Utrecht team. Thank you very much for taking care of all the details and making us feel like in our own university.

We look forward to hosting our next meeting in Spain. Fortunately, with better weather conditions than the strong heat waves of summer, in October the weather is really nice. The meeting is going to be in the city of Albacete (Castilla-La Mancha region). Albacete is about 222 km from Madrid, and 138 from Valencia, but we have a fast train connection between Madrid-Albacete and between Valencia- Albacete. We are setting up all the project's and its partners' needs. Keep going!!!

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We look forward to hearing about other work package progress with our next newsletter. Meanwhile we close this newsletter launch with some closing comments from Jean Pierre, Erasmus partnership coordinator on behalf of HU Utrecht University of Applied Sciences.

*We are on the road now! A road of an exciting journey on which we explore what experiential knowledge is about and how its value can be unfolded in the educations of nursing and social work. I am looking forward to an inspiring collaboration with all our university partners as well as the associate partners in each country.*

