Title and acronym: A practical toolkit for integrating elearning in Higher Education Curricula [ONLINEHE]

Project type: Erasmus+ KA2 Project, Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, KA226 - Partnerships for Digital Education Readiness

Ref. no.: 2020-1-RO01-KA226-HE-095434

Promoter /**Coordinator:** University of Piteşti, Romania

Duration: 01/05/2021 to 30/04/2023

Total project grant: 183680 Euro

Total expenditure (grant) for the University of Pitești: 36885 Euro

Local coordinator for the University of Piteşti: Assoc. Professor Dr. Eng. Dumitru CHIRLEȘAN

Summary:

Recent developments with COVID-19 and pandemics that threaten our way of life and work are

forcing organizations and governments to rethink the way we meet, work, teach, learn

and collaborate. A big push towards online education, distance learning and virtual teams is evident across the globe. According to UNESCO (2020), as of late March 2020, over 850

million students and youth – roughly half of the world's student population – had to stay away from schools and universities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Education is asked to

respond to this challenge by offering courses at a distance. So far, the large majority of content was offered by video conferences and Learning Management Systems. There is a

strong need to develop more immersive experiences for learners.

Although the need of online courses has increased, a few universities have been experimenting with eLearning as a teaching method or making online lectures a part of the curriculum

(Bezegová, 2017). Same situation in partner countries, Romania, Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Spain, and Serbia, where eLearning is not widely used in HE. So far, there is not any

common strategy on how universities can build a strategy on how to adopt eLearning in their teaching and learning.

With more than 90% of the student population going fully online during the last few months, there is a stronger need than ever to reform higher education (UNESCO, 2020). The

Bologna Process Implementation Report cited earlier, confirmed that blended learning is the most common across European Universities. The trend in higher education towards elearning,

and in particular blended learning, was already visible in 2014 when an EUA survey found that 91% of institutions offered blended learning (i.e. integrating eLearning into

conventional teaching) and 82% offered online courses (Gaebel 2014; EUA 2019). It is generally accepted that these trends will change dramatically in the coming months, since

COVID-19 accelerated the adoption of eLearning across the globe. In a systematic review of research in the use of e-learning, several gaps are identified among university staff, which

include lack of strategic understanding of the need for e-learning, the lack of skills to design and deliver online learning, and the need to improve assessment of education offered

online.

OBJECTIVES

1. To build the capacity of HE teaching staff, academics, learning designers, and teaching staff in integrating eLearning in the design and delivery of courses. (IO1, IO2, IO3)

2. Develop innovative quality resources for HE faculty members to support the adoption of eLearning in higher education (IO1, IO2, IO3)

3. To raise awareness on the need and value to integrate eLearning in HE in close cooperation with all stakeholders involved, including policy makers. (IO1-4)

4. Improve the supply of quality higher education opportunities for all. (IO1-4)

TARGET GROUPS

The project builds on the existing knowledge developed by partners and aims at supporting higher education institutions develop innovative policies and practices for integrating

eLearning

in designing and teaching courses. The primary target groups for this project include:

- Higher education faculty and instructors

- Policymakers and university leadership teams

- Learning designers, educational technologists, and support staff

- Higher education students (indirect target group)

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUTS

The project Intellectual Outputs are:

-IO1. Toolkit on how to adopt a strategy for eLearning in HE

-IO2. Training course

-IO3. eLearning platform and MOOC

-IO4 - Policy and practice guidelines for integrating eLearning in Higher education

Partners:

1. Universitatea din Pitești (UPIT), Romania (coordinator)

2. University of Nicosia, Cyprus
3. Diethnes Panepistimio Ellados, Greece
4. Asociacion Observatorio de Las Relaciones Union Europea America Latina (Ue/Al), Spain

5. Western Balkans Institute, Serbia
6. Centre for Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology LTD-CARDET, Cyprus
7. Vilniaus Universitetas, Lithuania

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