ECOLHE Newsletter

1st issue

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WHAT IS ECOLHE?

The ECOLHE project is an action research project that aims to create the best conditions for an exchange of best practices, at European level, in:

- Teaching digital skills in HE (higher education)
- Training course for teachers and tutors for improving online teaching in HE in the logic of LLL (Lifelong Learning), inclusion and innovation recalled by High-Level Group on the Modernization HE
- Recognition and validation of teaching competences in HE for teachers' professional development
- Recommendation for Academic Bodies.
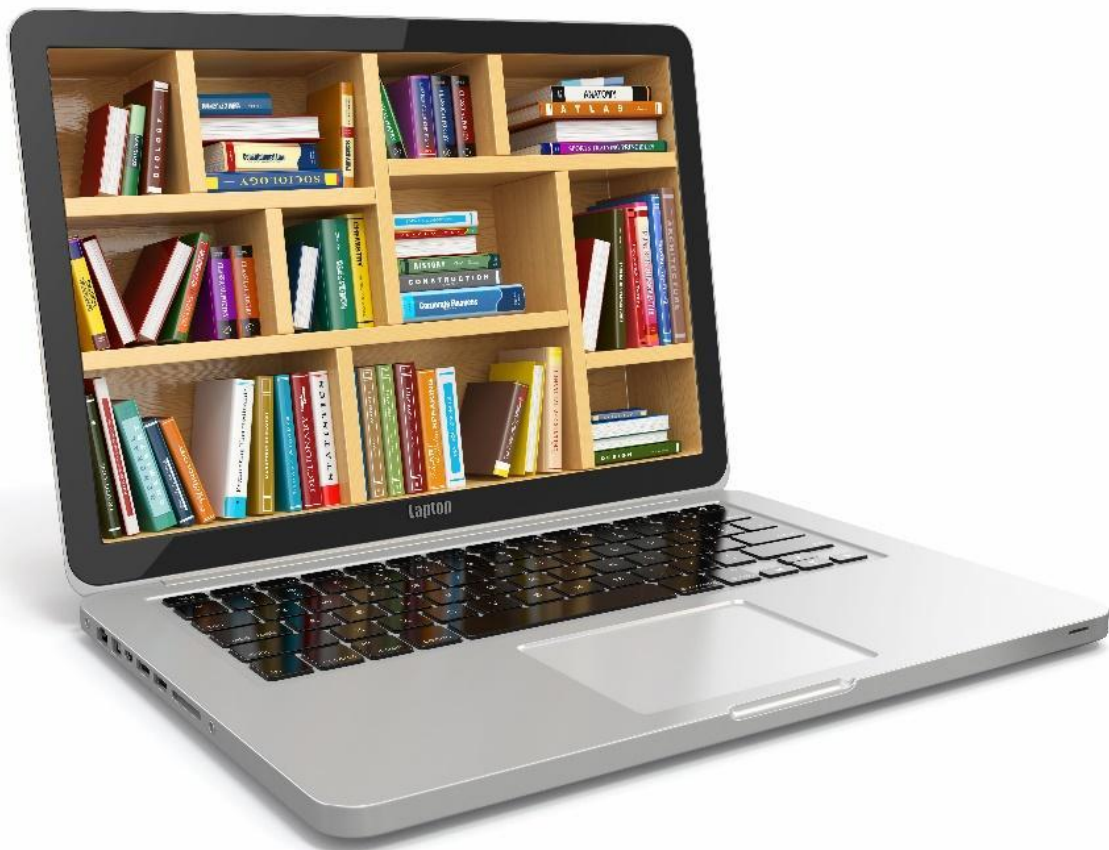
The project's main objective is to contribute to the improvement of schools' digitisation processes with the intent to intercept useful suggestion for policymakers, decision-makers, and Academic Bodies to build an EEHEA (European E-learning Higher Education Area) founded on the teacher's professionalization and EQAS (E-learning Quality Assurance Standard). As well as several research reports, the project will develop various training resources for education professionals. ECOLHE started in September 2020 and will last for 36 months.

The idea behind the project

A first concept of the ECOLHE project was born in 2017 and has been revised and improved since then. Well before the pandemic a clear awareness that the university system had to start dealing with a more intensive use of ICT in teaching and learning processes arose. By 2030, university students in the world should reach 414 million and, to meet their needs, the current rigidity of education tools and training systems will need to be overcome.

Today, the objectives of ECOLHE are more pertinent than ever: the project aims at highlighting experiences, practices and competencies of teachers, researchers, and university staff members active in the digital field, to foster the dissemination of best practices in training and skills development for online learning in higher education, according to the new experience of a hyper connected reality (Floridi, 2015).

It has been estimated that, after 2020, 90% of the jobs will require IT skills, it is therefore essential that education systems offer a learning paradigm that not only addresses current skills and knowledge deficits but helps people to become lifelong learners.

Today, it is hard to imagine future learning contexts, formal and not formal, without thinking about the use of innovative ICTs and new ways of online dimension significant involvement.

The principal objective of ECOLHE is to understand the way in which national policies have translated the European policies, and how universities have translated regulatory constraints in practice with the intent to intercept useful suggestion for policymakers, decision-makers and Academic Bodies to build a European E-learning Higher Education Area, founded on the teacher's professionalization and E-learning Quality Assurance Standard".

OUTPUTS

To achieve these goals, ECOLHE will implement different activities and outputs:

- analysis of organizational and teaching models, with reference to the role of HE in promoting innovation and
- teaching quality (IO1-IO5)
- the empowering of teachers' digital competences and strategies for online teaching (IO2-C1)
- the enhancing of digital tools and environments for lifelong learning, inclusion, diversity, and innovation (IO3)
- the continuous teachers' professional development (IO4-C1).

More in detail, the following are the outputs that will be produced by the project:

IO1 Report: "Digital Technologies in HE: from the European vision to the university governance"

This output explores how universities have transposed into organizational practices the provisions found in European documents, with a particular focus on the issues of exploitation of ICT for LLL, quality standards and teachers' professional development.

IO2 Training Pilot: "Online teaching in HE"

This output will be an online training course focused on updating teaching skills for teachers and tutors, to enable them to effectively integrate online and/or blended technologies in HE.

IO3 Training Pilot: "Engagement tools for HE online learning environment"

This output will identify methodologies and tools to foster the engagement of learners in online and/or blended learning activities to reduce digital dropout rates and enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes.

IO4 Tool: "Symbiotic Learning Paradigm (SLP): Teacher Competences, Methods & Approaches in HE"

This output will foresee the development and testing of a tool for the self-assessment of HE professionals with a focus on digital competences.

IO5 Report: "Recommendation and guidelines for Academic Bodies"

This output aims at providing Academic Bodies with a useful framework and instruments to improve teaching quality, also by enhancing online and blended learning environments in HE.

PARTNERS

Link Campus University Foundation's mission is to promote research, studies, and training activities. The main goals are the development and dissemination of knowledge in the fields of Economics, International and Political Relations, Business Organization, Communication, Legal matters, and all other disciplines of socio-economic, artistic, cultural, environmental, and health-related bases. FLCU avails itself of the elevated and international know-how of Link Campus University about both technology-enhanced learning/advanced e-learning and the expertise available, represented by professors and advisers, some of whom have experience in leading strategic advice to policymakers and supporting central government bodies and agencies of several European countries and beyond.

DITES provides a space for research and experimentation within the "Link Campus University" in Rome, dedicated to tackling topics related to education, lifelong learning, and guidance, as well as the use of new technologies in different learning contexts.

The **Università degli Studi Roma Tre** is a young university for young people. It was founded in 1992 and has grown rapidly in terms of both students and courses offered.It is highly rated in international rankings, especially among younger universities.

The **Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)** was created in Barcelona in 1994 and teaching began in 1995, with 200 students. It was the first university ever to run exclusively online. With more than 85,700 graduates, it is now one of the biggest universities in Spain.

The **European Association of ERASMUS Coordinators (EAEC)** is a membership network, which currently has more than 140 members, founded in 2004 in Lodz, Poland.

The **National University of Ireland, Cork (UCC)** (Irish: Coláistenah Ollscoile Corcaigh) is a constituent university of the National University of Ireland and located in Cork.

The **University of Patras, Greece** is a public academic institution located at Patras Greece, founded in 1964.

Laurea University of Applied Sciences operates in the Uusimaa region, Finland, at six different campuses. There are about 7,800 students, 600 staff members and 30,000 alumni in their community.

PROJECT EVENTS

1ST MULTIPLIER EVENT - THE ICT IN HE: FROM THE EUROPEAN VISION TO THE UNIVERSITY
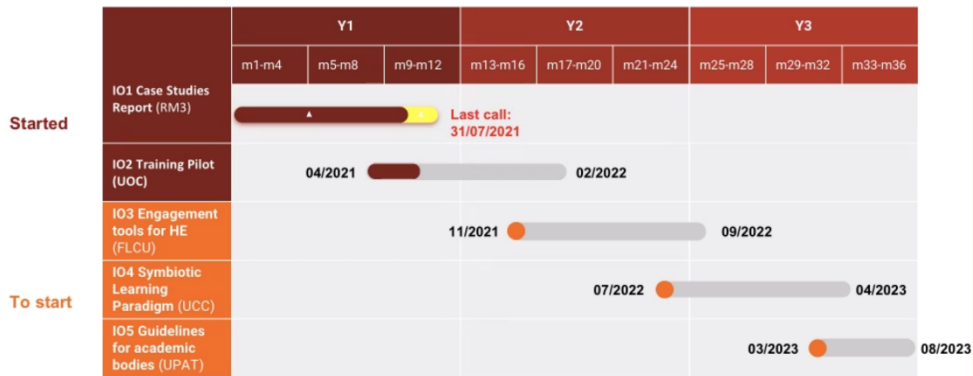
The first Multiplier event was held at M11 in Greece as tool sharing and co-evaluation for IO1 National research report: "Digital Technologies in HE: from the European vision to the university governance" (RM3) and IO2 Training pilot for online teaching in HE (UOC).

Partners set up its social network and searching throughout, grouped stakeholders and main country people to:

- think over the topic according to the question about teachers' digital competences in the digital era
- share the results of the cases study analysis (IO1) with the academic community and with its main stakeholders; the partners will compare and comment the situation of each partner
- country both from the point of view of legislation and of universities micro policies, based on the research evidence (IO1/A2.1)
- share plan objectives and purposes in order to increase IO2
- put together new experiences about training teachers' activities
- share criticism, trouble and suggestions
- have the best representative group which use search tools
- increase network of stakeholders, shareholders, educational institutions, digital publishers and developers
- co-evaluation activities realized and planned future ones.

ECOLHE IOs Project Gantt

		Y1			Y2			Y3		
		m1-m4	m5-m8	m9-m12	m13-m16	m17-m20	m21-m24	m25-m28	m29-m32	m33-m36
Started	IO1 Case Studies Report (RM3)				Last call: 31/07/2021					
	IO2 Training Pilot (UOC)	04/2021			02/2022					
	IO3 Engagement tools for HE (FLCU)			11/2021		09/2022				
To start	IO4 Symbiotic Learning Paradigm (UCC)					07/2022		04/2023		
	IO5 Guidelines for academic bodies (UPAT)							03/2023	08/2023	

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ECOLHE
Empower Competences
for Onlife Learning in HE

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PRESENTATION OF ECOLHE PROJECT AT THE ERACON2021 CONFERENCE BE EAEC TEAM MEMBERS

The project ECOHLE was presented at the annual ERASMUS Congress and Exhibition (ERACON2020), held in hybrid form from 5-9 July 2021m in Varna, Bulgaria. On behalf of the consortium, the project was presented by the partner organization European Association of Erasmus Coordinators (EAEC).

ONLINE 3-DAYS EUROPEAN PARTNERS STAFF TRAINING BESIDES COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ECOLHE project has offered European partners staff training besides COVID-19 challenges. Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Finland) offered series of virtual 3-day staff training seminar and workshop to the partners of the ECOLHE-project. ECOLHE partners training represented diverse group of members and participants. Every participant greatly benefited from each other's expertise and sharing best practices. The seminar consisted of three sequential days which were arranged in March, April, and May in 2021. The seminar was organized and coordinated by Laurea Finland's team along with ECOLHE partners, mainly lead by seasoned professional experts and technocrats: Pasi

Kämppi and Paresh Rathod. The first seminar day was focused on key development theme of ECOLHE project, "Towards Onlife education.", whereas the second one focused on pedagogical practices, study offerings and student support system and the last day had a clear focus around tools, techniques, and technologies in the online education.

The ECOLHE Staff Training covered wide variety of different topics and the presentation materials can be used for project dissemination, said Project Coordinator Stefania Capogna. Presentations by Student Psychologist Manne Pyykkö and Professional Coach Christopher Evatt received huge praised as being very interesting, useful, and inspiring. The organizers, Pasi Kämppi and Paresh Rathod, were happy to see how collaborative effort creates value for the whole community in international level. The main takeaway of the partners training- the educators and higher educations' roles are very essential in the modern digital era to support our future generation's growth and development.
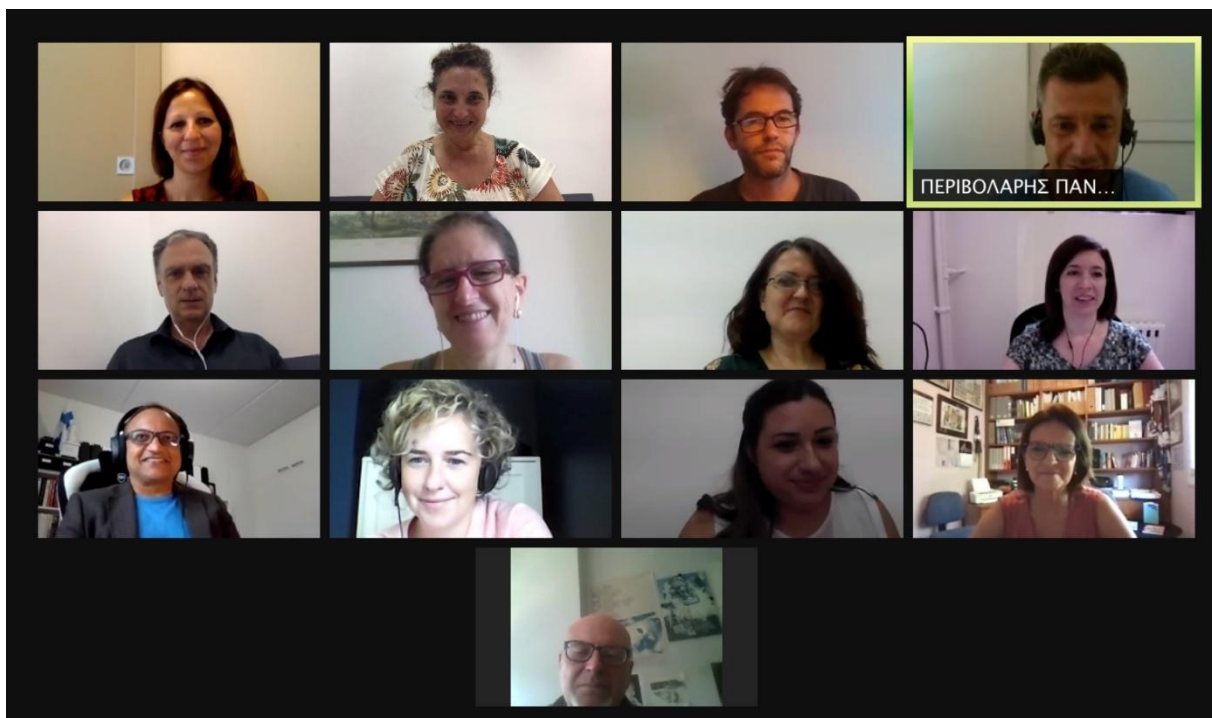
ECOLHE PROJECT AT THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE JOURNAL SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA

On Friday 4 June 2021, the research group of the Erasmus + ECOLHE project conducted the panel Rethinking Higher Education at the time of Covid: challenges, new perspectives, critical issues hosted within the Second International Conference of the journal Scuola Democratica. The panel's contributions reflected on the main issues of the ECOLHE project with the aim to explore the role of Universities and teaching-learning practices in contemporary society. In this regard the track developed an interdisciplinary discussion on the changes in universities already underway and accelerated by the covid epidemic, with respect to:

- new training model to respond to new knowledge and skills demands, in a context of a universal entitlement to lifelong learning
- the promotion of online quality relationships and e-learning standards
- the transformation of university in a complex organization, characterized by a more and more complex governance systems and the transformation of the internal and external management and power structure of roles
- the transformation of the figure of the university teacher and researcher accompanied by the need to rethink both the professional development system and that of insertion into the role
- the challenges caused by the digital revolution and the general demand for innovative learning methods and tools on the part of an audience of students that has changed significantly compared to the past
- the development of best practices in training and skills development for "online" learning in higher education (HE), according to the new experience of a hyperconnected reality (Floridi, 2014).

ECOLHE AND RE-EDUCO PROJECTS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED AMONG THE OFFICIAL RESOURCES OF REPUBBLICA DIGITALE

ECOLHE and RE-EDUCO projects have been included among the official resources of Repubblica Digitale, the national strategic initiative promoted by the Department for Digital Transformation of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers with the aim of combating the cultural digital divide in the Italian population, supporting maximum digital inclusion, and encouraging education on the technologies of the future, accompanying the country's digital transformation process.

DITES PARTNER (DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES, EDUCATION AND SOCIETY) SIGNED A NEW MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE EUROPEAN ECOLHE PROJECT WITH THE SKILLMAN ALLIANCE.

On May 21, DITES, a public research centre based in Italy, signed Memorandum of Understanding on the European ECOLHE project with the Skillman Alliance. DITES provides a space for research and experimentation within the "Link Campus University" in Rome, dedicated to tackling topics related to education, lifelong learning, and guidance, as well as the use of new technologies in different learning contexts. All DITES activities are carried out for and with schools and all the necessary public and private, institutional, and collective actors interested in the centrality of education in all its declinations: education, training, work, accompaniment, edutainment, and active citizenship. The ECOLHE project aims at highlighting experiences, practices, and competencies of faculty, researchers, and university staff in the digital domain to foster the dissemination of best practices in training and competencies for online and blended learning in higher education.

For this reason, participation in the skillman.eu network is a great opportunity to share and develop organizational learning processes.

For more information, follow us on [ECOLHE Facebook](#) and visit [ECOLHE project website](#).
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