

Engaged Learning in Europe

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IDC Impact Series 1



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Volume 1

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Executive summary

Introduction

Following the publication of the CaST State of the Art Report, where we looked at 28 separate examples of Engaged Learning across the six countries, this Compendium has taken a more in depth look at one example of Engaged Learning from within each of the six universities represented throughout Europe. Highlighted within the Compendium, as well as this summary, is the diversity and flexibility to be found within Engaged Learning initiatives. The examples provided range rather widely in their structure and intended outcomes. However, the one constant is each initiative's commitment to a concept where reciprocity between the students, universities, and communities, is prioritised. While the examples themselves share little in common, this diversity is a benefit of Engaged Learning and further cements the varied nature across the disciplines and Europe.

Case Studies from the Partner Universities

Ghent University, Belgium

Situated in the Department of Criminology, Criminal Law, and Social Law in the Faculty of Law and Criminology at Ghent University is the initiative Cannabis Sativa: Process of a Plant. Based on the theatre monologue, developed by UGent collaborator Herman Wolf, a play is performed on stage by a practicing lawyer defending the innocence of his "client", a cannabis plant. The initiative is curriculum based in both the bachelors and masters level and funded through the University. Though this initiative is in its infancy, the initial feedback from the course has been positive. Among the feedback provided from the students was an appreciation of seeing a real lawyer in their element, a practical experience that is otherwise lost in a traditional classroom setting.

Perhaps most interesting is the unique involvement with the community. While often within universities research is published in academic journals, this type of Engaged Learning theatre performance provided the opportunity to relay real world research findings in an interesting way to the community and also receive feedback on their thoughts over a highly contentious topic – cannabis legalisation. From this feedback, the research going forward is informed from the public that would otherwise be lost if published solely in journals/publications of an academic nature.

University of Turku, Finland

The case study from the University of Turku is an initiative called “Localized learning of urban planning and policy in the Baltic Sea Region”. This initiative was a series of three courses, organised jointly by University of Turku (urban studies minor), Estonian University of Life Sciences (master’s programme of landscape architecture), and University of Latvia (master’s programme of spatial planning) together with Urban Riga (an urban activism NGO). Each university partner organised one “hands-on” multidisciplinary urban planning course in its home country, with students and teachers from each partner university participating each time. The courses took place in three consecutive years from 2016 to 2018.

The idea was to engage students to work with real-life urban planning questions in a locality and develop new ideas or approaches benefitting the local community and the municipality. Learning-wise, graduate students were to apply theoretical knowledge they already had into practice in co-operation with local stakeholders. Moreover, they were to gain experience in working in multi-disciplinary and international teams to address a relevant topic in which the municipality needed new ideas and approaches. The community helped to inform students about solutions that could work for them. The general conclusion is that the course in Turku was well organised, got excellent feedback, and was considered successful, beneficial, and rewarding for all participants (students, stakeholders, and teachers). While the student work was not put to use as it was, the ideas contributed to conceptualisation and clarification of the theme and hence helped in their part the City of Turku towards reaching the strategic goals in this complex long-term planning quest. The city officials reported that they are referring back to the course’s outcomes from time to time in various discussions. The results have become part of a broader process in which the final implementable ideas emerge, transform, and gradually consolidate. The course also became another success story for urbanism related collaboration between the city and universities, paving the way for future joint-initiatives in Engaged Learning.

Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg, Germany

The chosen initiative from the Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg was a free form concept called in:takt. The "in:takt store" is a public, non-commercial, open space open to all and is billed as a place of diversity and chance. In:takt is an initiative that has emerged from the cooperation of actors from the OVGU, the city administration of Magdeburg, and local companies (WOBAU, MDCC) and operates a store in the old town quarter of Magdeburg. In this store, various seminars of different study programmes, institutes and facilities of the OVGU takes place as well as collaborative events which are not directly part of the teaching. The initiative is accompanied by a course seminar and has created several sub-projects associated with the initial concept.

The initiative in:takt consists of students, mostly from the Cultural Engineering course, who run a store in Magdeburg's city centre. In:takt also serves as a laboratory and experimental space for urban development projects. The initiative wants to be a free space for the citizens of Magdeburg and also a network node for organised civil society from politics, art, and culture. To this end, the initiative organises its own events in the store and the city centre. Though it organises its own events, the store will remain as free as possible so that other groups can rent it for events for a short period of time free of charge - citizens' meetings, coffee afternoons, games evenings, and information events by various NGOs are among them. The case study on the in:takt project shows that cooperation between lecturers, students and external partners is a constant process of negotiation that is largely shaped by individuals acting as spokespersons for their respective groups. Activities of alliance building and public representation serve networking and thus ultimately also the process of autonomy, even if only on an operational-tactical level.

University of Parma, Italy

The "Teaching Placement: Teaching without Borders" initiative at the University of Parma involves incoming exchange students from EU countries who would like to teach, who need to carry out their traineeship by teaching in a school, or who just want to have an experience in the Italian school system and fully immerse themselves in the Italian life and culture. The initiative consists of a native English, Spanish, French, German, (now also Russian) speakers in support of foreign language teachers in class activities to help students using the foreign language in their school daily routine, thus raising their confidence and fluency, especially as regards their speaking skills. This brings mutual benefits for both the student/assistant and the class: while the former acquires working skills and learns more about Italian language and culture, the school pupils can improve their foreign language proficiency and cultural knowledge while feeling more at ease in front of another student.

From the student's perspective, this initiative provides them the opportunity to further connect in a community they may otherwise have been kept separate from, and further provides opportunities to teach that have led to some students going on to consider a profession in teaching when they otherwise had not previously been on this track. The Teaching Placement brings benefits to the community and helps strengthen the connection between the University and the local schools in Parma. Even though this is more evident in the case of high schools, since the students now attending will be future university students, schools of lower level and kindergartens receive tangible benefits as well. The community as a whole thus has the opportunity to see and experience one of the academic initiatives and perceive how the University is doing something concrete and useful. The Teaching Placement also provides a real service for the community when

considering that having an opportunity of talking in a foreign language with a native speaker is not always possible for everyone; some families cannot afford to travel or to pay for private lessons to improve their children's language skills. In this sense, the Teaching Placement democratically gives everybody the possibility to practise a foreign language.

University of Malaga, Spain

The Master's Degree in Equality and Gender, which spans three semesters, is a multidisciplinary qualification at the University of Malaga taught by 41 professors from various backgrounds. To complete their internships, which is the Engaged Learning component of the course, students collaborate with many community stakeholders participating in the initiative. Students enrolled in the Humanities itinerary can do their internships choosing from different immigrant or women's associations in Malaga and beyond. The internship culminates in a final report and postgraduate students are highly encouraged to bring their investigation into the greater community to provide real data for pressing issues today in collaboration with several national and international NGOs, and public institutions, like City Hall, Health Counselling, Equality Counselling, Provincial Council, provincial prison, etc. In this way, the case presented gives students an open-ended, research-driven question while challenging them to present their results through their dissertation.

Students actively participate in workshops, often taking a leading role and showing great initiative. These same students, through a research-based approach, collect data. In turn, this data driven format provides the NGOs with specific proposals for improvement. Finally, the dissertations drawn up from the data collected during or after the work placement offer insight into the professional development and real-world application of the internship. Clearly, the main impact is seen in the reciprocal benefits to all partners and this is best seen in the focus of the workshops and activities organised. Their main purpose is to strengthen the immigrant women's social and work skills to help them in their process of labour insertion. Women work on vital concepts such as self-esteem, personal and professional development, and healthy lifestyle habits. At the same time, these workshops have served to facilitate their access to computer literacy skills, currently necessary in any job search. The idea of social coexistence is also stimulated thanks to one of the workshops among young people from the city's high schools, so that they understand the need to promote equality in all areas.

University of Exeter, United Kingdom

Grand Challenges is an initiative that has run at the University of Exeter for a week in June each year since 2013. The initiative has grown each year and now attracts over 500 students from across the University of Exeter's campuses in Devon and Cornwall. Grand Challenges provides students with the opportunity to work on a topic outside of their degree programme, creating innovative solutions to some of the most challenging sustainability-related global problems. Working as part of interdisciplinary Challenge Teams, students receive training, mentorship, and support from external partners and academic experts, empowering them to share their views and learn new skills, which they then apply to solve real-world issues. Students choose from one of several contemporary global challenges that are specially created to ensure that they do not require previous topic knowledge.

At the beginning of the Grand Challenges week, students hear from a range of academic speakers, external experts, and guest speakers with lived experience. The guests share their perspectives on some of the main challenges facing the world today and inspire the students to find solutions. The students then spend the week on campus in their interdisciplinary groups, developing ideas that address specific aspects of their Challenge, before showcasing them at the end of the week.

Grand Challenges has clear benefits for students, staff members, and the wider institution. The community also benefits from the initiative, directly through some of the student outputs, and indirectly through students feeling more connected to and embedded within their community. The programme is extremely popular amongst students who perceived Grand Challenges as a sociable, fun thing to do which enables them to gain transferable skills and enhance their employability whilst working on a societally impactful topic.

Conclusions

As has been highlighted already, and further demonstrated with the above examples, Engaged Learning as presented from these examples across Europe is wide ranging and very diverse. Mutual and beneficial partnership among universities, students, and communities can be incorporated into a wide range of disciplines with an even wider range of benefits and/or services provided to the communities in which they are situated, or beyond. While the CaST Case Studies Compendium has served to provide numerous examples of what Engaged Learning looks like in action across Europe, in future CaST will provide more general commentary and guidance from the collected knowledge from the State of the Art Review and Case Studies Compendium, and the future work to be done for the CaST Pilot Projects, in an Engaged Learning Toolkit.

Preface

The CaST project, supported by the EU's ERASMUS + Programme, includes partners in six European countries: Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The views expressed are purely the authors' own and do not reflect the views of the European Commission. This research was conducted from Summer 2020 to Winter 2020 with provisions therein due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The researchers would like to thank everyone who cooperated on this research in each of the partner universities, in particular the respondents who helped to gather the information. Without their cooperation, the execution of this research would have been impossible.



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1. Introduction

Courtney Marsh, Lindsey Anderson

1.1. Introduction to CaST

Communities and Students Together (CaST) is a project that sets out to understand and further develop Engaged Learning in European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). We define Engaged Learning as the process where students apply the theory learned at HEIs to a context outside of HEI by addressing societal concerns, challenges, or needs while producing knowledge in an equitable, mutually beneficial partnership. A large emphasis for our project has been on the concept of reciprocity, whereby the community not only receives a service by those in HEIs but are also actively involved, engaged, and contribute to the overall learning process. This, in addition to the benefits students receive, results in students and community partners co-producing knowledge for mutual benefit. We aim to push forward the agenda of the University as a part of an ecosystem of knowledge production addressing public problem-solving. The CaST project, supported by the EU's ERASMUS + Programme, includes partners in six European countries: Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The views expressed are purely the authors' own and do not reflect the views of the European Commission.

Preceding this publication was the CaST State-of-the-Art Report¹ which provided an overview of the history of Engaged Learning and briefly covered Engaged Learning examples in each of the six countries involved. The overviews were brief but gave a good indication of the current landscape for Engaged Learning in each of the countries. This report looks at a limited number of examples in depth from each of the partner universities. In this way the objective moving forward is to provide sufficient detail so that others in future may replicate similar Engaged Learning initiatives in their own universities around the world.

The term "initiative" with Engaged Learning, as used above, has been chosen consciously and purposefully in contrast to using terms such as course and/or project. This was done as a way to make our CaST project more inclusive. Not every university operates in the same way, both around Europe and even within the same country and limiting the Engaged Learning initiatives to those that have been incorporated into course curriculum limits the opportunity to showcase new and innovative, or perhaps even less funded, examples from across Europe.

¹ https://www.cast-euproject.eu/wedit/uploads/contenuti/17/cast-state-of-the-art-report_final.pdf

1.2. Common Features of Engaged Learning in Europe

The initiatives covered thus far in the CaST State of the Art Report were wide ranging in practices among, and even within, the partner countries. Our framework consisted of metrics such as the structure of the initiative, under which discipline it was conducted, accessibility, funding, and benefits to those involved, among others. When looking at the chosen initiatives under this framework, while there were recurring themes, there were no real patterns present when considering the above framework, thus cementing the flexible and diverse nature of Engaged Learning. Many of the examples covered have been formalised into the various course curricula and had a structured approach to the Engaged Learning format, while others were done on an ad hoc, less formalised basis. Among the examples, students from all levels (bachelors to PhD) were included, though not typically within the same initiative. Funding was another area that varied quite widely, even within the same country. Funding for the initiatives ranged from university provided (structured or grant-based) to external funders and/or external partnerships. Similarly, the examples provided thus far represent a range of disciplines.

One common area in the examples provided from the six countries was the benefit to the educators and/or staff associated with the initiatives. Many of the stated benefits in this category focused on publications and other, often emphasised in academia, important output opportunities or testing of their own research. Many of the stated benefits were tenuous, and even those that seemed more fulfilling to the staff involved (i.e. connecting to the community, experiencing a new type of teaching, updating course material based on student/community involvement), were largely based on benevolent acts with little recompense despite going above and beyond their required and/or expected obligations. The involvement and time put into these courses are often far beyond what would be expected of “traditional” courses found in university, and yet these initiatives are undertaken with typically no extra assistance or funds provided. These courses thrive on personal dedication to the field of Engaged Learning, and this can lead to a scattering of the initiatives in any formalised way as seen in the universities in the six countries involved with CaST.

Perhaps the most common theme among all of the case studies is the diversity of Engaged Learning policies within each of the countries. For example, in the British context, Engaged Learning is more formalised in some universities than others, but there is no national policy to dictate how it should be done; this is also the case in many of the countries involved in CaST. In Spain, there is no national policy to dictate a framework, but two thirds of Spanish universities have an Engaged Learning policy within their own strategic plans. In the universities involved in this project, nearly all have a formalised approach to Engaged Learning within their own university strategic plan, but this is perhaps a selection bias based on the premise that the universities involved in this project have an existing interest

in Engaged Learning. The most common theme to be found in the following case studies is the lack of any unifying theme. The lack of commonality serves to demonstrate the vast opportunities that are present within this type of learning. The case studies that follow are different in approach, discipline, outputs, and goals. These variances further cement the idea that Engaged Learning across Europe, or at the very least the six countries represented in this project, is quite diverse. This type of learning can be implemented beyond the examples given thus far within CaST, as will be seen further in later outputs stemming from this project.

2. Cannabis Sativa: Process of a Plant

Ghent University, Belgium

Courtney Marsh, Herman Wolf, Tom Decorte, Alexis Dewaele, Kris Rutten, Ann Buysse, Tom Vander Beken, Leen Van Gijssel, Noël Klima

2.1. Introduction

Because of the autonomous nature of higher education institutions in Flanders, the use of Engaged Learning in universities is quite fragmented. Maatschappelijk engagement (social engagement) or Community Service Learning (CSL) are often used as the equivalent to Engaged Learning in Flemish universities. This considered, many courses identified to fit our definition of Engaged Learning are not necessarily marked as such. In other words, one would not know the course they are taking part in is technically an Engaged Learning initiative if they were not already familiar with the terminology. The lack of consistency in marking these courses may also come down to a lack of familiarity on the part of the educator that stems from a lack of steady provisions for what Engaged Learning is at a higher level. However, the takeaway from this is that Engaged Learning courses do exist, successfully, in Flanders, regardless of their official status as such. Recently, CSL administrators started an informal network of Flemish CSL support professionals exchanging on good practices through conferences and regular meetings.

Flanders does have a history of involvement in Science Shops, but this is limited in reach. There is a Flanders Science Shop Network, but only two Flemish universities are represented – the Free University of Brussels and the University of Antwerp. Though this network has been created to give a more recognisable identity to Engaged Learning in these universities, the majority are still quite fragmented. One initiative worth mentioning is the Flemish Science Agenda². The latter is an inspiration document that connects various scientific disciplines around fundamental questions and social issues. Its aim is to strengthen the links between society and scientific research and to stimulate Flemish science towards innovation, creativity, and connection. The Flemish Science Agenda is based on more than ten thousand questions raised by Flemish people of all ages and with different backgrounds.

Flanders has several initiatives that enable Community University Partnerships (CUPs) such as the increased attention at different Flemish universities for societal valorisation and Technology Transfer Offices. All Flemish universities have good examples of CUPs yet there is no formal policy structure to support them. For example, UGent has several structurally funded business liaison centres (IOF) and (since 2015) a policy plan on societal valorisation including the establishment of

² <https://www.vraagvoordewetenschap.be>

Interdisciplinary Research Consortia aiming at Societal Impact (IDC)³. The University of Antwerp has Technology Transfer valorisation managers and Social Sciences and Humanities spin offs. This considered, CUP initiatives largely arise from a bottom-up movement. The largest Flemish research funding agency (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek⁴) has, for example, one research programme called Strategic Basic Research that focuses on innovative research with potential economic or societal applications (e.g., the generation of products, processes and/or services). The available budget for 2019 is circa €60 M.

2.1.1. UGent and Engaged Learning

Engaged Learning took shape at UGent with CSL as part of the university's Strategic Plan (2012-2016) and later in a European project (2015-2017, "Europe Engage⁵ – Developing a Culture of Civic Engagement through Service-Learning within Higher Education in Europe [Reference 2014-1-ES01-KA203-004798]). The

Figure 1 Ghent University Logo



latter is a 3-year project funded by the European Union with the purpose of identifying existing service-learning practice, promoting service-learning as a pedagogical approach, and creating a network in this region, where much remains to be done in terms of civic engagement and service-learning."

CSL in UGent is defined as "an experience-oriented form of education in which students within a course acquire academic competences and learning content, which they apply in a social context (community) and in which

they make a social commitment, about which they reflect critically" (Cress 2005, Eyler & Giles 1999, Furco 1996, Jacoby 1996). This definition includes internships, projects, master's theses, and seminars as an integrated component of the module. While these are forms of Engaged Learning, typically these types of approaches have a limited means of reciprocity when considering the limited active community involvement in the learning process thus contributing to the ambiguity of Engaged Learning at a higher level in Flemish universities.

UGent began a project for developing Engaged Learning initiatives at a university level, which resulted in an inventory of CSL-courses within UGent, as well as an online tool for lecturers. However, following the project's limited duration the

³ <https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-ugent/trackrecord/idcs.htm>

⁴ <https://www.fwo.be/>

⁵ <https://www.eoslhe.eu/europe-engage/>

CSL unit has been spread out among various areas within the university. During the hiatus, individual faculties and/or departments were expected to continue the initiatives of their own volition, and while this was done by some faculties, the practice is still very fragmented and not every faculty has offerings that include CSL. Because of this fragmentation, there is undoubtedly Engaged Learning courses that exist within the university but are unknown by the CSL unit. This considered, Ghent University has space dedicated to this type of learning on their website⁶, with key definitions and guidelines for how to implement such a course; with further guidance given within the UGent intranet. However, while there are some resources available through the UGent website, these are largely restricted to those within the university, so for those who are not already affiliated with the university, only limited information is available. The guidelines provided give three main components, consisting of factors involving academic, practical, and reflective sections. There is also mention of reciprocity between the academic side and the community, and as such, fits into our definition of Engaged Learning.

Over the last few years in UGent there has been an evolution in the type of educational support offered. Previously the support offered was focussed on purely educational aspects and aimed at individual lecturers. However, now there is an expanded focus on societal topics such as diversity, international relations, sustainability, social impact, and entrepreneurship, as well as on academic literacy. Also there has been a shift from a mere focus on individual lecturers to also addressing entire degree programmes. The goal being to stimulate lecturers within degree programmes to work together and create more coherence between course units (Learning Pathways). This means that social impact through education is now a formal part of the structural support for lecturers, and CSL is considered a powerful approach to reach such social impact. A ½ FTE, Leen Van Gijssel, has been dedicated to this role, starting from May 2019. Expected outcomes for the coming years include:

- Education tip (“Education tips” = UGent-specific online platform for education support) for both individual lecturers and degree programmes (both have now been accomplished);
- (Blended) train-the-trainer for degree programmes (this will begin in semester two of AY 2020-21);
- (Blended) training for individual lecturers (this is scheduled to begin in semester one of AY 2021-22);
- Ad hoc assistance in the set up and functioning of Engaged Learning initiatives.

Part of this role also includes communication of new developments in the Flemish Engaged Learning Community.

⁶ www.ugent.be/communityservicelearning

In addition, the Rector's office has identified six key themes and asked the university faculties to adopt those in some capacity: social identity, diversity, alumni activities, sustainability, talent management, and active learning. Faculties get support from experienced "opdrachthouders" (commissioners) to implement these goals. This process reinforces the structural support as described above.

As has also been a theme in the context of the CaST project thus far, within UGent, the academic staff who are involved with Engaged Learning initiatives often lack external incentive to continue on with such a course. These types of initiatives are labour intensive and thus require more extensive resources to function compared with a "traditional" course. This in addition to the lack of obvious benefits, outside of publishing, can create issues with sustainability. Though it is not thought vital that every educator should be required to adapt to this type of learning, it is considered important that every student should at least have the opportunity to experience such a type of learning during their degree.

2.2. Overview of the Chosen Initiative

One such initiative in UGent that practices the elements of Engaged Learning in higher education is situated in the Department of Criminology, Criminal Law, and Social Law in the Faculty of Law and Criminology. Based on the theatre monologue, developed by UGent collaborator Herman Wolf, a play is performed on stage by a practicing lawyer, entitled "Cannabis Sativa: Proces van een plant" ("Cannabis Sativa: Process of a Plant"). The project is a part of several courses in Law and Criminological Sciences:

- Rights: criminal law (duty-1ba), criminology (choice-3ba), drug phenomena (choice-3ba);
- Criminological sciences: substantive criminal law (duty-3Ba), formal criminal law (duty-3Ba), drug phenomena (duty-3ba), special criminal law (choice-3ba) and partly in the project current criminology (duty-2ba)

The project took almost a full calendar year to bring this initiative to fruition. Gradually it became clear that such an initiative is not only an excellent way to encourage collaboration with other colleagues, services, and structures in the UGent community, but also to encourage relatively large groups of students to reflect on a particular theme that is current and socially relevant. The play is written as a closing argument of a criminal lawyer who wants to convince the jury (in this case the student audience) of the innocence of his client (in this case the cannabis plant). As an actor/actress for this monologue, two or more (known)

Figure 2 Advertisement for initiative

SCHULDIG OF ONSCHULDIG?
CANNABIS SATIVA: PROCES VAN EEN PLANT

HET SLOTFLEEDOO VAN TOPPLEITER
WALTER DAMEN

Walter Damen

Herman Wolf, auteur & productiesler
 Frederiek Coet, spelregisseur & coördinator
 Els Dewane en Marin Van der Cam, hoors
 Kerkgroep publieksovername

Voorstellingen:
 woensdag 25/07/19 om 19 uur (19T)
 dinsdag 26/07/19 om 13 uur (20st. N)
 zaterdag 27/07 om 14:30 (20H)
 vrijdag 02/08/19 om 17:30 (Ald. Oostkerf)
 woensdag 14/08/19 om 17:30 (20H)
 woensdag 04/09/20 om 14:30 (19T)

UNIVERSITEIT
 FACULTEIT RECHT EN CRIMINOLOGIE

criminal lawyers are sought, who consider it a challenge to make criminologists and lawyers think about a number of subject trades. Previously, Wolf has written and produced representations on drug use (Smack!, 1993) and GHB (No Higher Need, 2005), seropositivity (How Immediate Is Soon?, 1999), and issues around asylum seeking (My country! My country!, 2013). These productions were also staged for class groups and often framed in a broader classroom context.

This class was conceptualised because of its innovative connection with the proposed

theatre piece. It serves as an alternative way to stimulate the processing of the substance and critical attitude of the students, rather than just the mere transfer of knowledge or the research work according to a paper as seen in “standard” courses. The students participate in the trial, they form the jury, and can judge the so-called “question of guilt” at the end of the performance via the voting system available. In addition, an interactive conversation/question round is provided with the actor in question. This creative approach fosters active involvement and gives students an added educational element in terms of insight and nuance.

As a medium, a performance is generally suitable for connecting the education and culture sectors. More specifically, theatre also lends itself very well to achieving the integration of knowledge and thereby to concretise the application of theoretical models. In addition, the presentation serves as a good mechanism to bring together various seminars within the faculty, both in law and criminology, which creates additional opportunities for interdisciplinary work between the law and criminology sides of the faculty. Further, it is well known that a concrete example, which corresponds to the environment of the students and on daily newsworthiness, facilitates and stimulates the processing of teaching and learning materials. As a theme, the discussion on the (de)criminalisation of

cannabis and the recent but divergent policies of different countries worldwide is a logical starting point.

This initiative, with all its opportunities and challenges, but also its limitations, has so far remained an experiment, although it offers apparent opportunities for a more structural embedding in the global education package, both in terms of the theme and in terms of the methodology used. However, in the light of the current corona crisis, some restrictions remain in place. As a result of the pandemic, there was more educational innovation and creativity than has been known in recent years. The speed with which a number of university services and individual employees/colleagues have helped shape the adapted online alternative is unprecedented and exceptional.

2.2.1. Structure of the Initiative

The theme of illegal drugs and the design using a (albeit fictitious) plea of a lawyer are ideally suited to be integrated into various courses of the Faculty of Law and Criminology (as well as potentially beyond). In the preparation of the effective implementation of the project, a number of faculty lecturers were approached whose subjects had a broad link with it. All of the professors involved reacted positively and enthusiastically to the proposal and offered their cooperation to encourage their students to attend a performance. For three subjects⁷ it was included as a compulsory teaching part in the curriculum. These courses included a writing assignment that was required along with the relevant exam; though one teacher indicated that all measured teaching time was necessary for the current course, so that an additional activity was not possible.

The performance was linked to the following courses:

- Criminology (1st Bachelor of Criminology, Prof. Marc Cools)
- Criminology of the Criminal Justice Division (2nd Bachelor of Criminology, Prof. Charlotte Colman)
- Drug Phenomena (3rd Bachelor of Criminology, Prof. Freya Vander Laenen, parttime Prof. Tom Decorte)
- Criminal and Criminal Justice Policy (Master of Criminology, Prof. Tom Vander Beken)
- History of Public Law and Politics (1st Bachelor of Law, Prof. Georges Martyn)
- Political Science (2nd Bachelor of Law, Prof. Nicolas Bouteca & Prof. Carl Devos)

⁷ Drug phenomena in the 3rd year Bachelor of Criminology, Skills III in 3rd year Bachelor of Rights, and Skills IV in 1st year Master of Law.

- Oral Skills III (3rd Bachelor of Law, Prof. Reinhard Steennot)
- Oral Skills IV (1st Master of Law, Prof. Reinhard Steennot)

In order to give all students of the Law and Criminology courses the opportunity to attend a performance, six performances were arranged instead of the original five. They were grouped as much as possible in the first semester, but for one performance it was not possible. In retrospect, this turned out to be an advantage, because the play could be adjusted/optimised on the basis of the first experiences and the student evaluation during the initial performances.

Apart from the final one, all performances had the same structure. Fifteen minutes before the start, the doors opened to the audience, theme-related music played, and (Latin) quotations (with translation) were projected. Five minutes before the start of the performance, the presenter gave a practical instruction about the interactive section (poll via an app). Then, in the introductory word, he/she explained the content and intent of the project, outlined the course of the activity, and asked the audience to answer the following question via an app: "Have you ever used cannabis?" The audience's responses were immediately processed and the results of the poll were projected onto the screen in front of the auditorium. A video montage of the comedy duo Kurkdroog was then shown, with street interviews in which a number of people were asked the same question. In order to increase the involvement of the student audience, the image was repeatedly frozen after the question, so that as a spectator they were given the opportunity to predict what the interviewee's answer was going to be (by shouting "yes" or "no" loudly).

It was initially considered to have a well-known Belgian actor perform the role; however, ultimately for the performance of the theatre text, a well-known criminal lawyer was chosen to make the play appear more believable and authentic (as well as give students an in person experience of how criminal lawyers perform in the courtroom which will be discussed further later). Because of his interest in the theme and the approach taken with the initiative, Master Walter Damen committed to taking on the role. As an introduction to Master Damen's actual theatre plea, a piece of the music clip "Nederwiet" by the pop group Doe Maar was projected. The criminal lawyer then made his plea, addressing the spectators directly as jurors in a trial and keeping the attention going by addressing them personally on their responsibility and the importance of their duties. After the performance, the performer asked the jury/audience to speak out via an app about the guilt or innocence of the defendant. Again, the results of this poll were immediately projected onto the front screen. At the last performance, there was one change. Master Walter Damen's colleague, Master Frederieke Cloet (who has drama education) assumed the role of prosecutor and held a substantiated appeal so that the students were presented with both sides of the argument.

After the announcement of the performances, there were not only a number of students from other faculties who were interested in seeing the play, but also UGent colleagues and people from the community (e.g. police forces, prevention

workers, lawyers, magistrates, first responders, and journalists). In total, the project reached approximately 2,000 spectators.

2.2.2. How the Community is Matched with the Initiative

In this particular initiative, there is no community or broker matching as such. The goal was to spread awareness of the topic at hand, in this case the argument for cannabis within a legal framework. However, there was no community matching in the traditional sense we have described thus far under the Engaged Learning framework within the CaST project. That is not to say there is no potential for this to happen in future, but this initiative is still only in its beginning stages. This is not, however, to say there is no reciprocity in the initiative's functioning. The idea of shedding light to a rather obscure area of law enhances the public knowledge of the subject while also giving students and faculty a better understanding of how the public has come to see the topic. In this way, education around the subject can be informed by public perception and work from there.

As far as external promotion is concerned, both the personal press contacts and the press service at UGent were addressed. This promotion, partly because of the theme and the name recognition of the performer, resulted in quite a bit of media interest; The Appointment on One, the news on VTM, several radio stations, and just about all Flemish newspapers reported on the project. The initiative was also announced several times via well-known social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Among other things, these actions procured a lot of demand from outside the university to attend a performance. More importantly, however, was that the main target group, the students, were also interested, leading to full and sometimes crowded (enthusiastic and engaged) auditoriums. One performance had noticeably fewer attendees, but after evaluation it turned out to be due to the scheduled time of the performance (a play as an optional activity on a date just before the holiday period).

2.2.3. How the Initiative is Resourced

Each year UGent puts out a call for funding for innovative teaching projects through two streams. While funding from the university is applied to more broad, interdisciplinary initiatives, there is also the option of applying directly to your faculty, as was the case for the Cannabis Sativa initiative. Each year the Faculty of Law and Criminology funds 2-3 initiatives through this call; however, funding is only possible for one year and other funds must be sourced beyond this. Currently the project team is in negotiation to secure further funding so the theatre performance may continue for first year students in the Faculty of Law and Criminology.

The general cost for the performance ultimately amounts to €21,894.28, which means an additional cost of €2,144.28 was added to the original budget given to the initiative of €19,750. This additional cost was paid with the reserves of an earlier initiative. This budget led to six performances instead of the originally planned five. While most cost items were accurately budgeted, there were also some savings. With the comedy company Kurkdroog (the creators of the video recording), the technician, and the actors, a lower price was negotiated; the direction and assistance were taken into account by the organisation and volunteers of the department itself.

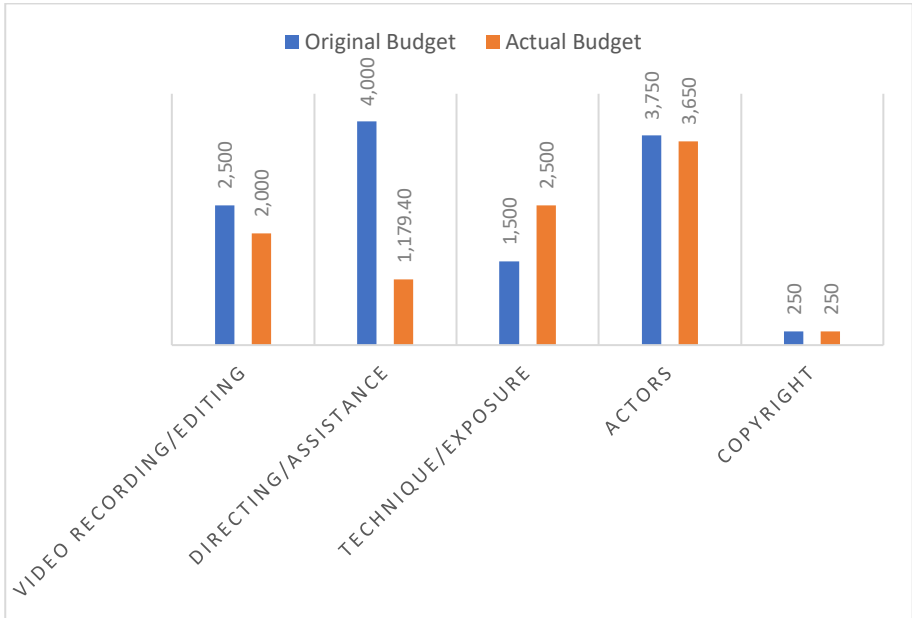
It soon became clear that reserving the necessary infrastructure would not be as easy as initially thought. Most large auditoriums are busy, so additional reservations in a period of several weeks for large groups of students was virtually impossible. An obvious solution was to integrate each performance into a lecture of a course, which eventually also happened. In concrete terms, there was supposed to be six performances in five different auditoriums, which was more logistically problematic, since the responsibility for the technical support in each room was always with someone else. So, there was location-based and non-project-related work, which was time-consuming, as the same agreements had to be made with other technicians over and over again.

The collection and removal of the material, the construction, and its degradation (sometimes very quickly because that activity had to take place between two lesson blocks); the preparation of the online survey; and the various projections required a number of volunteers found within the faculty departments. In addition, a freelance technician was requested to lead lighting and projections during the performances in good time. The latter was necessary because the different UGent technicians were not aware of the specific sound and projection changes.

Some essential props were also needed. For the main prop, the cannabis plant, seed of industrial cannabis was extracted from an (official) hemp grower, so that everything would remain legal; it is for this reason that the offer to buy or rent a plant from a small interior grower was not accepted. Despite the fact that the cultivation of industrial hemp is difficult in the winter season (they are annual plants), an industrial hemp plant was grown indoors in a timely manner, which has almost the same appearance as cannabis in terms of leaf form. As far as the props are concerned, the fact that the hemp plant is seasonal and cold-sensitive meant that eventually the purchase of a plastic copy as a back-up prop proved necessary.

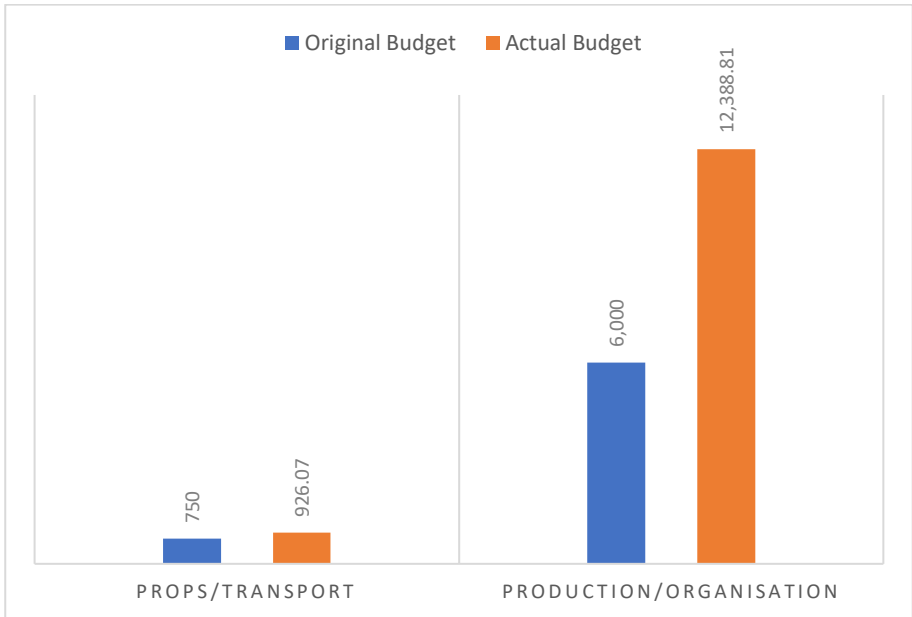
The biggest difference in amount lies with the production and organisation section. This sensitive additional cost is solely due to the reading and quoting of approximately 1,000 critical reflections, which according to the ECTS were part of the evaluations of some courses. Since the reading and quoting was fully assigned to the project, there was an additional cost to it, which fully explains the difference between the original budget and the effective expenditure. Apart from this additional action, there would therefore be a positive balance of more than €4,000.

Figure 3 Budget 1



Only two sections had a higher than anticipated cost:

Figure 4 Budget 2



2.2.4. Outputs of the Initiative

This Engaged Learning initiative is still in its infancy and therefore the outputs are still yet to be fully realised, particularly concerning the current COVID-19 limitations. In any case, the outputs are not tangible as such. The output is more so related to the stimulation of students to think more deeply about the topic and create an interest in following the debate around the topic outside of the classroom (i.e. in society or the media). There was also an added emphasis on the university as a whole encouraging students to think critically about more controversial topics. The knowledge exchange and awareness promotion are the powerhouses of the initiative and these can be seen quite clearly in the benefits outlined in the following section.

2.2.5. How the Initiative is Evaluated

The evaluation of the initiative was done several ways. In the first instance, students were asked to fill out an evaluation form, both based on quantitative measures and qualitative feedback. From these evaluations, the coordinator was able to assess the impact the performance had on the students and re-evaluate the current approach. This re-evaluation then led to the coordinator adjusting the content and approach based on any criticisms found within the evaluation feedback. This adjustment happened, for example, with the addition of a counter point to the argument in the final performance. What further adjustments will be made based on the evaluations are still in development and can, hopefully, be reassessed when the initiative is allowed to restart following the summer break. The evaluations gathered can be seen in the following section.

2.3. Engagement with Participants

2.3.1. Students

2.3.1.1. Instructor's Point of View:

One of the goals of this initiative was to understand how the public (in this case students and other audience members) formed conclusions when presented with the case material. This was gathered both from the reactions of the spectators and from the critical reflections/evaluations gathered from the students. Considering the emotionally charged nature of a topical fact, the theme of drugs, and the outspoken views that exist politically and socially led to the spectators being challenged and triggered to think about “the cannabis problem”, especially in the light of their education. With a survey of the audience (using the anonymous survey via Vote/Mentimeter), one naturally encourages the involvement in what they experience in the auditorium. A majority of those present participated in the survey at almost every performance and the answers clearly demonstrate a trend

in attitudes toward cannabis and the criminalisation of its personal use. It should be noted that a requisition of the public prosecutor's office was incorporated in the presentation of 4 March 2020, which led to a relative increase in the number of votes against the decriminalisation of cannabis, but a large majority remained in favour of scrapping the criminality.

Unfortunately, the figures for the premiere on 20 November 2019 in the UGent auditorium UFO are missing, despite a full audience (800-900 spectators, the largest number of the whole series). That evening, the UGent poll system "Vote" was used. Although it had been tested before, the programme was faulty and did not register votes, so ultimately the poll had to rely on the much less anonymous, and more unreliable, form of voting, hand-raising. After the performance, it was learned that Vote did not allow more than 150 participants at one time and this is why the system failed. Because of this limitation, the following performances relied on the Mentimeter app, which proved to function well for large groups.

There was a direct interaction between the actor and the audience which benefited the students in seeing how a real criminal lawyer operates in the courtroom. Master Damen not only played the role of a lawyer, but he also directly interacted with those who sat in front of him. In this performance, they were no longer students, but the sworn in jury in the court. He addressed them as jurors and tried to convince them with facts and figures, but also adapted his approach by responding to their personal contributions. There was also direct contact when tasting coffee or the so-called space cake, actions that visibly led to reactions and increased attention. The performance also appealed to the personal responsibility and citizenship of each audience member, he/she had to make a judgment in honour and conscience and therefore weigh all the arguments against each other, which implies a greater commitment than the standard transfer of knowledge found in a traditional classroom. The compelling nature of a problematised subject prompted a number of students to effectively take it upon themselves to look up additional information, which created problem-driven learning as an engine for further research and could be read explicitly in the critical reflections. The play was regularly described as an 'eye-opener'.

A thousand students of the courses Skills III, Skills IV, and Drug Phenomena received an additional mandatory assignment. As a result of the performance, they had to make a personal and critical reflection of about 500 words, with a choice of the following topics:

- (Evolution of) cannabis policy in Belgium;
- Drug legislation;
- Legal and illegal drugs;
- The criminogenous aspect of cannabis.

The collected reflections show that some of the students have begun to think seriously about the subject, started collecting or looking for information themselves, have debated with friends and/or family, and revised or strengthened

their original position with new arguments. A common criticism found in the feedback was that the play lacked any counter argument allowing for the students to fully understand both sides. This, together with the feedback from others and a progressive insight, ensured that a substantive reworking and organisational adjustment was made during the project period, and the addition of the counter argument in the final performance.

It should however be noted that a theatre performance does not have the scientific underpinning of a paper; a criminal lawyer uses "all tricks of the floor" to convince the jury of being equal. There are scientifically verifiable facts, but also hyperboles or emotional and populist statements. Students must be able to make that distinction or learn by means of a prior interview and/or a debriefing, group discussion, or assignment. Following initial evaluation/feedback, a counter argument was incorporated through the role of a public prosecutor. This was done so students could think critically about the arguments given and then reflect on the counter argument; therefore resulting in less bias in their position/opinion.

With this form of work, there are still opportunities that have remained untapped. For example, research based on the survey of a relatively large group of students on the theme of drugs or a text analysis separating scientific arguments and emotional arguments (whether additional arguments are falsified or verified).

2.3.1.2. Student's Point of View:

The students who participated in the surveys largely rated their general judgement of the theatre performance as good to very good, with a 21% share rating it average, and less than 4% rating it as bad. Similarly, a majority also agreed that the theatre performance yielded valuable knowledge and/or insights. While there were additional questions asked in the surveys, quantitative results were mostly positive. The most notable negative outcome was in reference to the students being asked whether the theatre performance required active participation of the students. While the goal is of course to actively engage the students during the performance, it is understandable that the students may have felt to be less engaged when seated in very large, and usually quite full, auditoriums.

While the evaluation of the course remained overall quite positive, the qualitative feedback gave the opportunity for students to further expand on what exactly they thought of the performance. Generally, the concept presented was well received, but, as has already been mentioned, the largest criticism was in the lack of a counter argument during the performance. Many thought that the performance, and thus learning opportunity, could be greatly enhanced if given a counter argument so they can expand their way of thinking and become fully informed of both sides of the argument. Indeed, the feedback provided by the students who benefited from the reconstruction of the final performance after the initial feedback came in highlighted that they enjoyed both sides of the argument being covered. From this, it is generally acceptable to conclude that the initiative

was well received by the students for its unique approach to learning as well as the opportunity to learn from a real life criminal lawyer in how to behave (and perform) in a courtroom.

2.3.2. Community

This initiative is only in its first year, and as such, the focus in the initial run were on the overall creation of the performance and engaging the students involved. However, that is not to say that the community did not participate. There was outside interest in attending the performance, and where requested this was most welcomed. This interest was in part garnered by the rather well known Flemish public figure, Master Damen, willing to take on a role and start the debate in a public theatre setting about legalising cannabis, which can be a rather sensitive subject.

Taking into account the interest of other schools and of the questions received in connection with additional performances elsewhere in Flanders, this initiative could appeal to other students/student groups or a wider tier of the population with the necessary resources and a targeted promotion under the UGent flag. Since UGent considers its mission is to make education and research more visible to the outside world and to become more socially anchored, it seems at least worth exploring that arena further and offering the project as a product to interested services, organisations, and other educational institutions. Opportunities will also be explored with new or other groups of students within the University and to expand that audience of spectators with a targeted campaign for an external audience. Further, upon reflection, the approach going forward is to adopt a more systematic approach toward inviting community members not connected to academia to be part of the initiative and attend the performances, or perhaps create a performance solely for interested groups. This considered, in order to guarantee the quality of the offer, a rehearsal period should be provided and a professional director/actors should be called in.

2.3.3. Staff

This initiative was largely driven by the energy and enthusiasm of the team behind it, and of course the financial support and encouragement from the faculty level, but without the personal drive behind the performance from the team, it would not have been possible, or at the very least, as successful as it was. Though this may seem rather negative, it is not out of line with the experience on the part of the staff in regard to the Engaged Learning initiatives covered thus far in the remit of the CaST project. Incentive, as well as overall benefits, for the staff seem to be low priority, if any is given at all.

One of the larger benefits this initiative has on staff is the demonstration and practical application of learning content for their students with no additional burden to them. To link it further to individual courses, during the preceding

lectures, time can be made available for a short session on the performance and theme, so that the project is better framed within the training content. However, this considered, it is necessary to ensure that the coordinator of the initiative is then given adequate resources (i.e. time) to complete the practical work associated with the performances.

As has been the experience researching the Flemish context during the CaST project, typically when evaluating Engaged Learning initiatives the benefits for staff largely fall into two categories: personal fulfilment and publications. Interestingly however, one of the largest benefits for the staff directly involved in creating the performance was the ability to step outside of the so called ivory tower of academia and the traditional publishing (via papers) mechanisms. The moniker of publish or perish in the academic world, though still heavily relied upon, limits the reach of your work to academic journals, and thus, typically, only academics who read them. Using a different medium, such as a theatre performance in this context, gives the opportunity for the data and findings to reach a wider audience, and in turn, have a wider impact on those actually affected by drug policy. Though perhaps specific to this type of Engaged Learning, this benefit is an interesting, and innovative, concept to consider.

2.4. Added Value for Impact

2.4.1. What Worked Well and What Didn't in the Initiative

It can be generally concluded that this project has succeeded both in terms of content and organisation. The great press interest, the student audience reached, and the reactions in student evaluations and critical reflections are proof of this. During the project process, the initiative was already optimised for the best result to budgetary returns, so that further structural implementation in its current form with a relatively limited budget was possible.

Specifically, performances in the 1st Bachelor's degree of Law and the 1st Bachelor of Criminology are perfectly feasible after consultation with the teachers involved, also because the actors in question are willing to take up the performances. Drama as a form of work challenges the students and activates them, especially when the theme is problematised and topical. In the future, further research can be done on whether a similar initiative, but with a different theme, can be developed. This will have to take into account the same budget as the current one. In view of possible decisions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences for meetings with a large audience, as mentioned above, a display on an image carrier (video, projection or streaming) can be chosen.

The choice between a "real" criminal lawyer instead of a professional actor is based on the role model and the introduction of as much realism as possible in the learning environment; students were able to reflect on the professional power that occurred in front of them in the auditorium. Though a trained actor can show more theatricality, a sense of presentation, intonation, and text-to-text, this can be

solved (partly) by strong direction and a practitioner who is familiar with the subject matter (as was chosen). While the benefits to the students from choosing a practising lawyer have been considered, it has been thought that if this production were to go forward outside of the university, an actor would be more appropriate for the role given the necessity for stage presence and schedule availability.

Another aspect to consider now in the coordination of the performance given the added benefit of hindsight is the choice of the different locations for the stage performances; this choice was not efficient. In future, it would be considered beneficial in terms of cost-saving and maintaining the link with certain subjects, that similar projects provide one auditorium for a series of performances, with the same technician.

Figure 5 Master Walter Damon during production



2.4.2. Facilitating Factors

This initiative provided a unique and interesting approach to Engaged Learning for us here at UGent. However, because of this novelty there were also growing pains associated with the planning and successful launch of the initiative. With experiments such as these, a number of support services within the University are not always sufficiently trusted. They fall back on regulations and invoke their limited mandate or declare themselves unauthorised or impotent instead of genuinely supportive. That area requires more coordination, for example by giving the necessary weight to innovative projects. In addition, administrative procedures remain difficult, cumbersome, and complex, although the colleagues of the various secretariats provided the necessary support to the coordinator in the end.

Also to be considered in the success of this initiative is the support given to the coordinator by colleagues in both enthusiasm and promotion for and of the performance. Further, from a university level, this initiative was made possible through the promotion and funding provided by UGent. It is then of course necessary to acknowledge the University as a facilitator in allowing this initiative to happen as the budget was not small, particularly when comparing it to previous Engaged Learning initiatives the CaST Project has reviewed (see CaST State of the Art Report).

The community was also very receptive and interested in this initiative, as seen in the press coverage and media attention given to the performances. There was also interest given in having the performance recreated in locations not associated with UGent (and even outside of Ghent) so that a wider community could be reached. While the initiative as of yet is still largely focused on the students and UGent community, there is potential to widen the audience further and bring this form of Engaged Learning to a new, and more diverse, audience.

Of course also necessary to consider is how the Belgian Laws have impacted the success, or even possibility, of this theatre performance. In Belgium, cannabis is illegal but decriminalised. This perspective, and legal status gives UGent the opportunity to even approach this type of subject, as compared to countries where cannabis is strictly illegal and tolerance is very low. There is also an open mindedness found in Ghent that has potentially impacted the (positive) reception of this type of performance and Engaged Learning subject matter.

2.4.3. Broader Societal Impact

Overall, this performance exemplified what a good first step in developing an Engaged Learning initiative at the university level should be. There are of course improvements and efficiencies that could be made, but these types of enhancements come with the benefit of hindsight. There was definitely value seen in this approach for students, and that was reflected in the student feedback; even more so in the final performance when the initial feedback was acted upon and the performance included a counter argument for the students to consider. This approach to Engaged Learning is innovative and dynamic and provided the students who took part with real life experience that just cannot be taught in a classroom. As touched upon by the coordinator, as well as in the student feedback, watching a practicing criminal lawyer “perform”, as law practitioners could be considered to do while in an actual courtroom, gave the students a way to view what it will be like when they enter law trials themselves. For those in the criminology tracks, though they may not pursue law in the same way the students studying law might, they are still able to see how what they study, in specific reference for this performance to drugs, is manifested in a real world setting.

As discussed previously, though the community impact was limited in the first iteration of this initiative, there was a desire to involve the community and engage in a reciprocal learning environment with them. While it is noted that this was

limited, there is potential for this reach to increase in future revivals of this performance, more so if you consider the potential of this approach to Engaged Learning to be adapted to other subject matters. Much of the capacity in the auditoriums for the performances was reserved for students, but now that the demand for such a performance is known, this can be anticipated in future, and bigger venues and/or more performances can be coordinated to accommodate an increased community participation.

While the societal impact is clear to see, the economic value is an area that could be improved for this initiative in future. Particularly if this design concept were to be used elsewhere, for example in smaller higher education institutions, the budget is not necessarily feasible in all scenarios. However, that considered, it is possible to scale the budget. Though societal impact is of course important in any Engaged Learning initiative, it must be reconciled with a budget that is achievable on a consistent basis, otherwise the initiative risks becoming a one off occurrence that is not sustainable, and thus, not beneficial in the long term.

2.5. Conclusions

Cannabis Sativa: Process of a Plant is an innovative Engaged Learning initiative undertaken by Herman Wolf for the first time during AY 2019-20 at UGent. All considered, it was a successful first run for an Engaged Learning initiative situated in the Law and Criminology Faculty and this is supported by the backing of the members of faculty, attention from the media, and generally positive feedback from the students. While this performance still has room for improvement, and indeed has even improved from the initial debut, what is important is the critical reflections already undertaken by the coordinator to improve it in the short time before the ultimate and penultimate performances afforded by the winter university break.

Perhaps one of the most potentially impactful benefits of this initiative is the opportunity to expand the approach for Engaged Learning to a number of different subject matters within the criminological sciences and law, and even beyond if desired. A vital aspect of this initiative going forward is the continuous investment into the budget, without which this type of initiative just would not be possible. Also to consider is the necessity for an expanded budget if this format of Engaged Learning initiative were to be adapted for other subjects as has been suggested.

A large consideration that will be necessary going forward is the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. As of the time of writing, Belgian policy has necessitated that UGent limit its capacity in large gatherings to 53; this is a marked decrease in the previous numbers (which were around 8-900 in large auditoriums). How these limitations will be reconciled with an integral part of Engaged Learning, connecting with the community, is yet to be seen.

3. Localised Learning of Urban Planning & Policy in the Baltic Sea Region

University of Turku, Finland

Elina Sutela, Sampo Ruoppila, Jarkko Rasinkangas

3.1. Introduction

Engaged Learning, as understood in the CaST project, does not have a clearly defined status in Finland. That said, many initiatives, courses, and projects in Finnish HEIs fit the definition, but the term “Engaged Learning” or anything equivalent is not used to identify or label them. Moreover, these initiatives are often stand-alone courses or projects and dependent on external funding or efforts of individual staff members to organise them. Coordination and institutionalisation lacking, the exact number and scope of the initiatives is also unknown⁸.

In this section the focus is on the University of Turku (henceforth UTU), located in its namesake mid-size city on the western coast of Finland. The university was established in 1920. It has 20 000 students, and it employs around 3 400 people. Various international rankings place UTU as the best two percent among universities in the world⁹.

Activities resembling Engaged Learning (yet perhaps not always emphasising community benefits), such as internships or other practical learning activities supporting working life skills or entrepreneurship are not uncommon in UTU. For instance, internships are compulsory and extensive in some disciplines (e.g. medicine, teacher education, or social work), but also greatly applied in a voluntary and/or shorter manner in many others. Furthermore, several courses or projects incorporating elements of Engaged Learning can be identified, though these are typically voluntary rather than obligatory, and thus somewhat at the fringe of curricula.

In addition to the example analysed as a case study below, we want to raise another UTU-based example here. The training course called Project Aces (Projectisation) has become a rather established initiative over the years. It is a business-orientated education, in which the idea is that students develop their skills in working life and project management skills by working on real life projects with clients. Businesses, public sector organisations and NGOs can offer projects that involve a development task. The participation fee for an organisation is €500 (excl. VAT). The projects have included e.g. developing customer

⁸ See, Chmelka et. al. 2020.

⁹ For details see <https://www.utu.fi/en/university/international-university-rankings>

communication, analysing the working atmosphere, enhancing web marketing, and launching a new product line. Some projects have had a societal approach, such as the one on how the safe houses initiative of the Finnish Red Cross could better reach young people. Nonetheless, the emphasis has been on entrepreneurial goals and skills, and this is why we have not raised Project Aces as a main example of community-based Engaged Learning.

UTU is currently preparing the new strategy for 2021–2030. Following the Finnish tradition, “Engaged Learning” is not recognised as such, yet its central ideas are in line with the goals on societal impact. Alike research universities throughout Europe, the UTU strategy 2021-2030 promotes e.g. multi-disciplinarity in research and teaching, developing new and inspiring learning experiences, promoting working life competences, and involving students in research work. The university aims to be an active societal participant and promote policy-relevant research. While economic development issues and entrepreneurialism are emphasised, the broader need for societal projects and learning experiences are recognised too.

3.2. Overview of the Chosen Initiative

The case study is an initiative called “Localised learning of urban planning and policy in the Baltic Sea Region”. This initiative was a series of three courses, organised jointly by University of Turku (urban studies minor¹⁰), University of Latvia (master’s programme of spatial planning), and Estonian University of Life Sciences (master’s programme of landscape architecture), and Urban Riga (an urban activism NGO). Each university partner organised one “hands-on” multidisciplinary urban planning course in each university’s home country, with students and teachers from each partner university participating each time. The courses took place in three consecutive years from 2016 to 2018. The initiative received external funding from Nordplus Higher Education, a mobility and network programme in the higher education sector, on bachelor and master levels, for the Nordic and Baltic countries. The external funding was used for travel, lodging, and related organisational costs.

The idea was to engage students to work with real-life urban planning questions in a locality, and developing new ideas or approaches benefitting the local community and the municipality. Learning-wise, graduate students were to apply theoretical knowledge they already had into practice in co-operation with local stakeholders. Moreover, they were to gain experience in working in multi-disciplinary and international teams. The courses took place in cities of Rezekne

¹⁰ At UTU, urban studies is considered a possible specialization within several majors, and it can only be studied as minor (25-35 ECTS). The people in the course had majors in e.g. sociology, geography, political sciences, futures studies etc. Only master’s level students were approved on the course.

(Latvia), Narva (Estonia), and Turku (Finland). The exact theme of the course varied, but the idea was to address something relevant and topical in which the municipality needed new ideas and approaches. The theme was agreed with each municipality in advance.

The main part of each course was an intensive week in the host city. The intensive period was the best option, as students were travelling just for this occasion and were on full board. At the beginning of the week, students were organised into groups. By themselves, they chose a specific topic to work on within the broader theme. Besides introductory lectures, the core of the course work included collecting and analysing data, getting to know the local context, and interacting with several stakeholders, such as representatives of the municipality, residents, NGOs or companies, and preparing the group work with teachers consulting and supporting them all along the way. The results of the student groups' sub-projects were put together and represented to the municipality in the end.

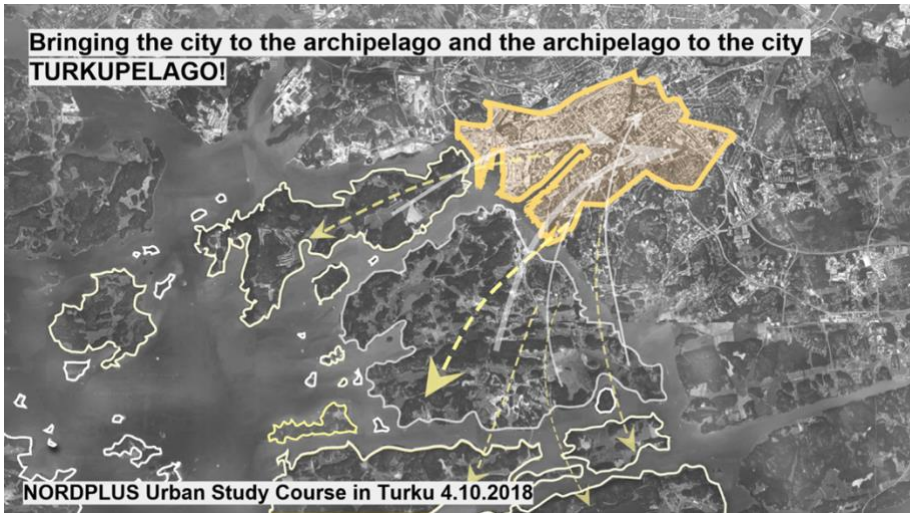
Before the intensive week, each university had organised its own preparatory seminar to familiarise students with information relevant for the topic and the local circumstances. This phase also involved an online gathering where student groups (by that time consisting only students from their own institution) presented their pre-seminar findings to all others, international peers including. The course was aimed at students at master's level with a background in urban planning, landscape architecture, and urban studies. The group of students participating in the course was different each year.

The initiative was based on a concept Latvian partners had developed previously. They had organised a number of intensive field-work-orientated courses with the same kind of idea, yet with a less pre-determined structure and more dependence on students having to come up with a course work concept on their own. During the three-year initiative, the course structure was further developed by adding more structural and guiding elements to help students to choose and develop their group's projects.

This case study concentrates on the last, third course organised in Turku in 2018. The chosen topic was how to enhance the connection between central Turku and the adjacent archipelago. The city of Turku is in the Western coast of Finland and is surrounded by one of the largest archipelagos in the world, if measured by number of islands and islets (40.000). Although within the immediate vicinity of one another, the central city and archipelago are perceived as somewhat detached. Besides physical connection, the students were encouraged to think of the connection also in wider terms, e.g. culturally and mentally. Benefiting from these natural surroundings have been a strategic aim of the municipality, but new ideas were welcomed. This is also a local democratic issue, as recreational areas (by the sea) should be as widely accessible to the public as possible.

The case study is based on the course documentation (the final report for the grant agency, student feedback, the course's final presentations, the course description) and seven interviews (3 teachers, 2 students, and 2 representatives of the main stakeholder).

Figure 6 Source and copyright: Localised Learning of Urban Planning and Policy in the Baltic Sea Region - course (2018)



3.2.1. Structure of the Initiative

The intensive course in Turku took place from September 29, 2018 to October 6, 2018. Altogether 36 students took part, 12 from each HEI, and comprising altogether 13 different nationalities. The students worked in six multi-disciplinary and multinational teams chosen beforehand by the teachers. They did six projects that approached enhancing the archipelago connections from different viewpoints, all including recommendations for the municipality. The six teachers included two from each HEI with respective specialisation (spatial planning, landscape architecture, and urban studies). In addition, one extra teacher focussing on group dynamics (and urban activism task) was hired from the partner NGO Urban Riga.

The Turku week was preceded by a seminar organised by each partner university for its own students, but including a common virtual seminar for all students, for which the students prepared presentations for each other. The aim of this preparatory work was to familiarise the students with the topic area more broadly and to help create a suitable interpretative framework(s) for the fieldwork.

The intensive week was a combination of lectures/seminars, excursions, and workshops, with an emphasis on the latter. The student teams decided on the topic of their course project at the beginning of the intensive week. The lectures were related to the course theme and included aspects of landscape planning, urban regeneration, urban policy, and collaborative urban planning. The lectures were timed so that they served as introductions for the tasks the students were guided to do to proceed with their projects. The practical work included excursions (getting to know the circumstances, both guided and on their own),

planning the project, interacting with different stakeholders, gathering and analysing the data, and preparing for the presentations. Many days finished with intermediate presentations on how the group had progressed with their work during the day. The days were long and these presentations took place after dinner.

At the end of the week, a public seminar was organised to present the results to the municipality's urban development professionals. The students also arranged a small urban action event, "Kiss my saaristo (archipelago)" after the public seminar. This event's aim was to further interact with the community by involving citizens and presenting the main results of the project. In Turku, the students organised an event at Föri, a city ferry connecting the banks of the Aura River running through Turku. During the event citizens of Turku discussed and commented their views on the Turku archipelago and its uses. The course finished with a dinner, farewell party and distribution of course diplomas for the participants.

The agenda for the intensive week was carefully planned and structured in advance, as the projects were required to be finished by the end of the week and the course was extremely time-constrained. This included pre-planning the schedule not only for seminars, lectures, data collection, and group work, but also mealtimes and travelling. Practical things, such as logistics, accommodation, and meals, were readily planned and the costs were covered by the external grant. This enabled the students to focus solely on the course work. The workdays were long, usually from 9 am to 10 pm, even later toward the end. The students had been informed in advance (repeatedly) that during the intensive week the course would take all the time and they should not make any other plans for that period. The in-advance planning had developed through the three years. By the time the planning of the Turku course started, the two previous courses had already taken place. Based on these experiences, in Turku the course streamlining was strengthened and more time was reserved for students to discuss and plan the practical work among themselves. Also, the course topic was a bit more specific as compared to the previous years, when quite loose framings had distressed students as they encountered difficulties narrowing down the topic within the limited timeframe. The Turku topic seemed to work as a somewhat clear, yet loose enough, frame in which students still had ample room to manoeuvre in developing their project ideas.

The organising team remained the same throughout the three years long initiative, which made adjusting the plans easy. As the course concept was already quite familiar and the main pitfalls recognised, the planning process in Turku was described as rather smooth and did not take that long to implement. Another advantage was that Sampo Ruoppila, who led the Turku team, had a position in which he was working as a knowledge broker at the interface of the municipality and the university. This helped with communicating all the project needs with the municipality, including reaching the relevant stakeholders, and suggesting a topic

which had relevance for the municipality, and which would be suitable and interesting to deal with the kinds of multi-disciplinary and multi-national student teams that were expected.

3.2.2. How the Community is Matched with the Initiative

During all three years, the course-hosting municipalities were the initiative's main stakeholders, including the City of Turku as the main stakeholder in this course. The course topic was agreed with the municipality and it was involved in preparation, including briefings by local planners and other relevant experts (tourism, events, recreational services etc.) to students during their first working day. The final seminar, i.e. the presentation of the results was targeted to the same experts, plus a politician leading the urban environment board at the city council. They all also gave feedback on the students' ideas.

The community matching benefited from the existing collaboration structure, the Turku Urban Research Programme, between the City of Turku and the two local universities. The programme seeks to increase collaboration between academic urban research and policy practitioners in urban governance, planning, and policy, and to advance knowledge exchange¹¹. Conveniently, the director of Turku Urban Research Programme, the knowledge broker serving both institutions, Sampo Ruoppila, was also the Turku head of the organising team in this initiative. He had all the necessary contacts and local knowledge to identify the topic's connections to the policy preparation and negotiate collaboration with the municipality's experts.

The course topic, enhancing the connections between the central city and the adjacent archipelago, had been a strategic aim of the municipality. Yet it is a complex issue and the plans and the measures of how to obtain this aim remained vague. Hence, the municipality could also recognise the benefits of having a multi-national urban planning course to suggest new approaches and ideas. The topic idea was developed by the local teachers, one of whom, Jani Vuolteenaho, had organised a geography course on perception of maritime character of Turku and done some research on the theme the previous year. That course too had policy relevance and—unusually for a student project—its results were published as a report (Vuolteenaho 2018) by the Turku Urban Research Programme. The results of the previous course served also as background material for planning the course in 2018.

Identification of additional stakeholders was a task the students needed to think within their projects. By default, the students would contact the necessary stakeholders themselves; each team had at least one Finnish-speaker for this purpose. In addition, the University of Turku's team included a hired project

¹¹ See <https://www.turku.fi/en/turku-info/urban-research>

secretary (a student from the previous years' course), who helped them with finding the right people and organisations.

3.2.3. How the Initiative is Resourced

Tuition was funded by the participating HEIs, i.e. it was organised within their regular teaching work and budgets. The course had six academic teachers, two from each organising university. Their role was to plan and implement the course, give lectures and tasks for students, but also to help, comment, and guide the individual groups during the course helping them prepare the presentations. The course idea included since the beginning the idea that besides academic teachers, a co-production and pedagogy specialist with expertise in group-dynamics (representing the NGO Urban Riga) worked with the teachers and the groups the whole week. This was due to organisers' anticipation that working in multi-disciplinary groups would have its challenges as students might not initially be familiar or even welcoming with other disciplines' approaches or concepts. The host university (UTU) was responsible for organising, managing, and handling the administrative details for the course in 2018. Otherwise partner universities had an equal workload conducting the course. This included planning the lectures and workshops, supervising students, consulting, and evaluating their work.

The external funding by Nordplus Higher Education, a mobility and network programme, was used fully for covering all the practical expenses for running an international course, so no direct costs were charged from the participants. Of the approximately €25,000 received, all was used to cover international and domestic travelling, accommodation, and meals of all teachers and students, plus rents of the meeting and conference rooms and some material costs.

Teachers and students from Latvia and Estonia stayed in the same hostel, Bore, for the whole week. Those from University of Turku mostly accommodated at their own homes in Turku, except for a few students and one teacher living in locations with poor and/or time-consuming public transportation connections. Ideally, the organisers would have preferred everybody to stay at the same place, but this was not an option budget-wise. Given the time constraints, the spaces used for teaching and group works was also located nearby or adjacent to accommodation.

3.2.4. Outputs of the Initiative

The main output was the compilation of the student groups' projects presented in the final seminar, targeted for the municipality's city planners and other urban development professionals. Besides the material combined in the presentation¹², all student groups also submitted a more detailed report on their own

¹² https://issuu.com/samporuoppila/docs/final_presentation_usc-2018

(sub)project. The reporting was carried out in the form of PowerPoint-slides – one of the projected learning tasks being how to communicate complex ideas concisely. The university’s communications team made a news article about the final seminar and the course. The second output was a public urban action event that was planned parallel to the presentation and organised the following day. The public event was conceptualised and organised by the students with the help of the urban activism specialist.

3.2.5. How the Initiative is Evaluated

The organising partners conducted an informal intermediate evaluation immediately after each course to help plan the following courses. This way the organisers were able to address identified challenges or problems and knew what worked during the course. A short written version of this self-evaluation became part of the final report submitted for the Nordplus Higher Education programme. UTU also collected feedback from their own students after each course. A more detailed description of engagement and impact is described below. The description, which concentrates on implementation in Turku, is based on the final report, student feedback forms, and interviews with the teachers, students, and representatives of the City of Turku.

3.3. Engagement with Participants

3.3.1. Students

In general, the feedback received from the students was very positive. The theme, atmosphere, contents, and structure, as well as practicalities, all received top marks. Students brought up that they liked working in the multi-disciplinary and international groups. While some conflicts within group works were recognised, they did not appear as a buzz killer of the course as a whole. All in all, no major improvement ideas came up concerning the course in Turku. It should be noted, however, that this assessment is based only on the feedback of n students from UTU (10 course evaluation respondents and the two interviewed students). On a scale from 1 to 5, the students gave the course an overall grade 4.6. The feedback was positive also on different areas, including information and study materials, the contents, the practicalities, and whether the students were treated fairly and the expectations were clear enough. All the aforementioned dimensions were graded around or above 4, though some criticism was also brought up in open-ended questions (see below). Learning by doing as well as multi-disciplinarity and international collaboration came up in comments as a welcomed variation to otherwise theory-oriented studies.

The interviewed students described the experience as positive and rewarding. They appreciated the course as a personal learning experience which offered a place for “hands on learning” and applying theoretical knowledge into practice.

Both of the interviewed students had quite theoretical majors (economic sociology and futures studies), so these types of practical courses were rare in their studies. The course offered a glimpse of the working life after the studies and an experience in project work. For one student, the course offered a spark to specialise in urban studies and eventually even pursue a career in the field.

While most of the feedback was positive, a couple of areas for improvement could be recognised. First, the intensity meant that the course was very tiring for some students and this was one area which got somewhat mixed reviews. One interviewed student described the experience as “rewarding but tiring”. She described the course as living in “a bubble” for a week, which also meant that returning to everyday life and recovering from the experience took a while. There were a couple of mentions in the student feedback of some students being extremely tired during the course and that the last two days “went by in a blur”. On the other hand, many students did not seem bothered. Another interviewee described that he did not mind the long working days as the work was meaningful and motivating.

Second, they found that the pre-seminars could be improved. The two students interviewed were both a bit confused with the goal of the preliminary seminar, because the tasks given were considered somewhat unclear. This is fair criticism as the tasks were given at a fairly general level. UTU students were divided in three multi-disciplinary groups, with one focusing on public events, one on residential developments, and the third on public space – and asked to frame their presentation from the viewpoint how these connect with the course topic. The results did vary. From the students’ viewpoint, more concrete tasks and study materials better related to the course’s theme directly would have helped. However, regarding the international online seminar, one student mentioned that it offered the first touch on how students from other fields approached the theme, while doing the pre-seminar work with UTU teams gave a chance to get to know the students from other disciplines from their own university.

3.3.2. Community

The main stakeholder was the City of Turku, of whom two representatives were interviewed: Antti Kirkkola and Päivi Pohjolainen. They both work with the promotion and tourism development topics in Turku administration’s management level and took part in collaborative planning of the course topic. They also represented the beneficiaries at the municipal side.

Overall, the course was regarded as a positive experience from the municipality’s point of view. The collaboration process and the multiple ways in which the course theme was approached in students’ projects were appreciated by both of the interviewees. Both would also welcome new iterations of similar projects. Kirkkola described this course as one of the best collaboration experiences from his point of view. The planning process included negotiations on what sort of input was expected from them, concluding with a principle that it should be

informative but not too guiding, as the expectation was to gain new ideas. Also the municipal representatives got a rough idea what sort of views this set of students might be able to produce. The planning worked quite well in their opinion. They recognised the importance of already existing links, most importantly the knowledge brokering and prior research collaboration within the Turku Urban Research programme. The chosen topic was considered beneficial since profiting from the archipelago and the seaside location were the municipality's strategic development interest, including making the city more attractive for tourists and newcomers as well as residents alike.

From the municipality's point of view, the course offered a chance to gather new ideas on how to approach the theme and to gain "thinking outside of the box". The internationality of the course and the student body was appreciated and clearly added value from their viewpoint. Besides emerging professionals, the international students were considered also as representatives of potential visitors and thus their insights welcomed as outsiders' perception and opinion on a hot development issue. The combination of educational backgrounds (spatial planning, landscape architecture, and urban studies) were considered suitable for the task. After meeting the students twice, including the final presentation, they described the students as motivated and interested, showing an effort to find new ideas.

The results of the project were described as interesting and all in all the kind that was sought after. The concrete level of the ideas was appreciated. Though certainly some works also included ideas already invented, circulated, and deemed unsuccessful in the city organisation. The results were not put into use as such (this was not the aim either) but contributed to clarifying ideas and developing concepts around the theme. The course results have been referred back to in discussions from time to time.

This type of collaboration was quite new for the two interviewees¹³. According to Kirkkola, this meant that he did not even entirely realise the course's potential beforehand. The course was recognised as beneficial as it was, but afterwards he thought the results and the process could potentially be even more useful. Both interviewees had some development ideas which are elaborated in the section "Added Value for Impact".

3.3.3. Staff

The three teachers who shared their experiences included Sampo Ruoppila and Jani Vuolteenaho from UTU and Friedrich Kuhlmann from the Estonian University of Life Sciences. Similar to the students and the municipality, the teachers also considered the course successful as well as a positive and an

¹³ If the city planners were interviewed, the answers might have been different, since there is a tradition to use summer schools and student competitions as a source of generating ideas in early phases of the development process.

inspirational experience. For example, Vuolteenaho described the project as “one of the teaching highlights of his career”. In general, they all welcomed more projects and courses like this.

The teachers brought up that the good atmosphere, structure, immersion, the theme’s suitability for multi-disciplinarity, and this type of pedagogical approach as the positive aspects of the Turku course and the overall initiative. For Kuhlmann, the topic of the Turku course was also professionally inspiring from a landscape architecture viewpoint. The structure and agenda were considered fluent and balanced, and the interaction between students and stakeholders good. From the teachers’ point of view, the multi-disciplinarity and the intensity of the course made it pedagogically different compared to traditional classes. Multi-disciplinarity required helping students to find a common language between the disciplines. When they did, it was a rewarding experience for all. The intensity meant that teachers needed to stay alert in regard to group dynamics and potential conflicts, which would normally probably go unnoticed or would not emerge on a typical class with less pressure on reaching decisions in a group quickly.

The teachers did not bring up any major aspects for development or something that they would do differently if the course was to be organised again. This is explained by the fact that the course in Turku was the third and final iteration within the initiative, and the courses had already been re-developed. Therefore, the course in Turku was already a smoother process as compared to the previous courses.

3.4. Added Value for Impact

3.4.1. What Worked Well and What Didn’t in the Initiative

The general conclusion is that the course in Turku was well organised, got excellent feedback, and was considered successful, beneficial, and rewarding for all participants (students, municipality, and teachers). The overall atmosphere was described good and encouraging. In this section, we will reflect on few aspects of what worked and what could be improved, if a similar course was arranged in future. However, no major need for re-development was identified.

The chosen theme proved to be a successful one, as it had practical relevancy for the municipality, it suited well for the multidisciplinary approach, and all this had a good motivational boost for students. The theme was framed well enough and easily understandable, yet also broad enough with room for students’ own interpretations and creativity. This was clear especially after the students had experienced the archipelago on a boat ride and finding their way back to the city centre, as they were dropped to different locations, and handed an observation task (as well as public transportation tickets).

The theme was professionally inspiring, a real complex planning and urban development issue, as noted by the teachers interviewed. The previous intensive courses had shown that some students might get frustrated and distressed if the

theme was perceived as too broad and it was left entirely up to students to formulate the topic for their project work. This experience together with relevant background information on the local context helped to define the theme suitable for the course.

The smooth flow of the intensive course required careful planning and structuring of the agenda, including finding a balance with inspiring input (lectures and excursions) and leaving enough time for students' own work. This was mostly described as balanced during the Turku course. With the tight timeframe the smooth flow of logistics and other practicalities was also important.

The teachers were aware that the multi-disciplinary nature of the groups could potentially create conflicts, as students from different disciplines might not be aware or appreciative of each other's different professional viewpoints – especially when added to the intensity of the course. However, this was acknowledged in the planning, and to counter the matter, an additional teacher with expertise in group-dynamics was included in the team. Nonetheless, all teachers needed to be alert to this issue, and it was also discussed with students as a part of the preparation seminar. Nevertheless, conflicts, distress, and arguments did arise during the Turku course too, and the counselling work of the additional teacher was needed to get some groups back on track. However, this was considered almost unavoidable in this type of an intensive course, and it was reacted upon immediately. Based on the interviews and student feedback, this worked well, and it did not affect the overall good atmosphere of the course.

The students brought up pre-seminar as an area that could be developed further. Based on student feedback and interviews, the UTU pre-seminars' assignments which expected students to make connections between general trends and local developments were met with confusion and dissatisfaction, and an expectation of pre-selected study materials to the point. However, the virtual seminar combining all students from the three involved HEIs did manage to give a glimpse of other disciplines' approaches.

The collaboration between the municipality and the university was described as successful by both. Nonetheless, the municipality's representatives brought up some viewpoints on how to develop Engaged Learning types of initiatives in the future. They suggested producing more extensive or rigorous background materials for practitioners to create expectations, as it happened with this course that the full potential of the collaboration was realised only afterwards. They also suggested reporting the results in more detail, explaining the identified problems and solutions also for those who were not part of the process including the final seminar. While the municipality's interest was important in choosing the course theme, the idea was nonetheless that the municipality should refrain from giving too detailed guidance on how the students should approach it. According to Ruoppila, this was understood and the collaboration worked out smoothly; they were also looking forward of gaining new ideas.

Nonetheless, a municipality interviewee suggested that an intermediate feedback during such a process could be useful. Pohjolainen brought up that this way the

city could inform students about already tested ideas or the laws or regulations that might make it difficult, if not impossible to implement some ideas in practice. She considered that the option to give intermediate feedback could also enhance commitment from the municipality's side. Incorporating this idea is worth considering in future collaborations – especially the more regular ones that reach over a longer period of time. During this course the group work was carried out in such a short time, within a matter of days, that there was simply no time for intermediate feedback (“reality check”) with the municipality. The students were instead encouraged to brainstorm ideas with some consideration over funding viewpoints, but not possible legal or political constraints.

Based on the student interviews and feedback, such an intensive course seems to be a bit of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it allows a full immersion into one topic and is an unforgettable experience. The students get to know each other better than they would in a regular group or project work. Working in “a bubble” for a week was described as fun, combining work and play while doing something meaningful and interesting. Especially for UTU students with theoretical majors, the course offered variation and a rare chance to apply theories into practice. On the other hand, the week was indeed intensive and some students reported being extremely tired. The longest workday was almost up to 16 hours. The students were prepared for the workload in advance, which likely helped. Still, the feedback indicated that some students would have needed an even clearer picture of what the intensive week actually meant. One student felt that the last couple days went by in a blur and another described that returning to the regular daily rhythm took a while. However, overall, the students did not seem too affected by the workload and most of them did not bring it up as a problem.

While such a course may be inaccessible for students who cannot clear a schedule 24/7 for a week, already struggle with exhaustion, or cannot travel, it is rare that this type of course is even on offer. The regular courses stretch over a longer period of time, and students travelling from other countries to attend a field-work period is very rare. Attending the course meant absence from other studies for a week. Based on the feedback and the interviews, the students were able to clear out their schedule and the studies did not pile up. Still, timing is sensitive to target group's study schedule. In this case, the timing seemed to be successful. The costs of travelling, accommodation, and meals being covered certainly increased the accessibility. Usually, these types of courses are organised in summer schools, in which the students need to cover the expenses themselves, which limits who can afford to attend.

Overall, this type of international joint course is a rare phenomenon. Considering that all costs were covered, it hardly would have been possible to have the students and teachers of three universities together any longer than a period of one week. Further, repeating a similar international course, with expenses covered, would not be possible without external funding. However, it would certainly be possible to conduct a somewhat similar international course as a summer school. If UTU were to do so, it would need to be with another HEI that

offers urban planning or landscape architecture degrees. Nonetheless, with a modified theme, the same type of course could be arranged with the local student body only. Though this modified course would have to take place over a longer period with repetitive fieldwork and could also include the suggested intermediate feedback.

3.4.2. Facilitating Factors

There were several factors that supported implementation. The most obvious one was the external funding from Nordplus Higher Education to cover the international mobility costs of teachers and students. This greatly enhanced the student accessibility regardless of their affluence. The external funding and the fact that it was a voluntary course ensured also a great level of autonomy in planning it – the organisers basically could decide themselves how to do it. The drawback is of course the lack of continuity. As with many other Engaged Learning initiatives in Finnish universities, this one was discontinued after the funding period ended. Moreover, applying for the funding, planning, and implementing the initiative in the first place was up to the motivated staff members interested in this type of activities.

Another supporting factor was the initial course concept, which the Latvian partners had developed beforehand, and which was modified to and further developed during the initiative. The consortium and the teachers of the three courses remained the same, which made it easy to develop the concept and fine-tune what was needed to address any appearing shortcomings. For instance, adding a few structured elements for the students to feel less anxious about choosing their particular project topic and reserving more time for their group work was added upon reflection of the experiences in previous courses.

Yet another supportive factor was that the multi-disciplinary course had an identifiable academic home at the university. UTU has an urban studies minor which is designed in the way that it has few obligatory and many voluntary courses to choose from, and this one was suited perfectly within the latter. As part of the minor, it had an immediate “audience”, a student pool from various disciplines doing urban studies. The course was open for others to apply to as well, but suitable background studies were required anyway. The minor’s leader was also the person to apply for external funding with the partnering universities. The final advantage was the already existing collaboration practice between the municipality and universities, namely the Turku Urban Research Programme, and the course organiser’s expertise in manoeuvring the local connections. As a director of the programme, it was quite easy for him to find the right contact person(s) within the municipal organisation and negotiate the suitable form of collaboration, including the briefings in the beginning and the experts being present to hear and comment the results in the end. The local knowledge and networks of the Turku team, consisting of the two teachers and the project

secretary, helped the students to find the right stakeholders when conducting their individual group works.

3.4.3. Broader Societal Impact

The course delivered in terms of developing new ideas on how to advance the recreational use of the archipelago, including pointing out few under-used yet accessible and scenic spots, giving ideas how to develop them with moderate costs, how to enhance the connections to the wider archipelago including developing economic activity there, and how to develop the perceived presence or nearness of the archipelago in the city centre. While the student work was not put to use as it was, the ideas contributed to conceptualisation and clarification of the theme and hence helped in their part the City of Turku towards reaching the strategic goals in this complex long-term planning quest. The city officials reported that they are referring back to the course's outcomes from time to time in various discussions. They have become part of a broader process in which the final implementable ideas emerge, transform, and gradually consolidate. The course also became another success story in manifold urbanism related collaboration between the city and universities. It certainly paved the way for future joint-initiatives in Engaged Learning.

3.5. Conclusions

The three-year initiative "Localised learning of urban planning and policy in the Baltic Sea Region" consisted of three courses held in three countries, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, in consecutive years (2016-18). As such, an international course bringing together students and teachers from three different disciplines, universities and countries, for an intensive field-working in one locality, is a rarity. The grants received from Nordplus Higher Education were necessary to cover the exceptional international mobility, full board included.

All in all, the course series was considered a success in establishing or fostering the ideas of engaged in learning in all the localities in which it took place. An opportunity to run a similar course – yet with different theme, each chosen for its own locality – for three times, helped to improve the course format and details time after time, which all contributed to a quite smooth experience by the end.

The case study reported the last one of the three courses, held in Turku in 2018. The course brought together master's students from urban planning, landscape architecture and urban studies to develop new ideas on how to enhance the connection between central Turku and the adjacent archipelago.

The initiative received very positive feedback from the students, the stakeholders and the teachers. The students considered it as a useful personal learning experience in which they could apply theoretical knowledge into practice. The representatives of the main stakeholder, the City of Turku, felt that the course delivered the kinds of new ideas they were looking for. The course was also

considered professionally inspiring by the teachers. The practical implementation of the course benefitted greatly on the established systemic collaboration between the city and local universities, the Turku Urban Research Programme.

While running a similar international joint initiative would require external mobility funding (or collecting fees), the executed course(s) did, however, offer valuable experiences, ideas and examples for developing a local version. An additional advantage will be stretching it over longer period of time as the running costs (full board) do not require extreme time sensitivity and 24/7 commitment from the students. The idea is to develop such a course as the local pilot of the CaST project.

4. In:takt

Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg, Germany
Alexander Chmelka, Philipp Pohlenz

4.1. Introduction

"Magdeburg has many potentials, which are often somewhat hidden from view"
(Weiner et al., 2019, p. 16, Trans.)

The topic of Third Mission, at least on the official website of the Otto-von-Guericke-University (OVGU), belongs to the "Key Profile Areas". Here it says:

The University of Magdeburg regards itself as a reliable partner for science, industry, politics and culture; it has a defining role in the cultural and social life in Magdeburg and northern Saxony-Anhalt. The social development that is especially characterised by demographic change has an impact on the requirements of and demands placed upon Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg. The core areas of research and teaching are increasingly expanding to encompass activities that are relevant to our society. These include the areas of further education, knowledge transfer and start-up support. [...] Projects organised by students are also building a strong foundation for Magdeburg's application to be the European Capital of Culture in 2025¹⁴. (cf. OVGU Third Mission, Trans.)

4.2. Overview of the Chosen Initiative

The city of Magdeburg has been destroyed several times in its history. The destruction, as well as the reconstruction, according to the model of socialist architecture in GDR times have changed the cityscape permanently. Further to this, the vacancy of flats and shops is perceived as one of the major challenges of the city (cf. MDR). As such, vacancy is both a prerequisite and one main theme of the in:takt project. It is conceived as an interim use of vacant shops and emerged from a cooperation between OVGU, WOBAU (local housing cooperative), and the municipal department for economy, tourism, and regional cooperation. The Magdeburg telecommunications provider MDCC provides the project with a free Internet connection. It should be mentioned that a similar cooperation exists between the University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg-Stendal (H2) and the

¹⁴ On 28 October 2020, Chemnitz won the bid to become the European Capital of Culture against Hannover, Hildesheim, Nuremberg, and Magdeburg.

other partners mentioned, which has resulted in a similar project called "schauwerk" (cf. schauwerk).

The company provided the building for running costs only (electricity, etc.) which are covered by the Department for Business Development, Tourism and Regional Co-operation of Magdeburg. The funding of the project is connected to the municipality's mission to revalue Magdeburg's city centre and its cultural qualities. In return it was agreed that the project helps develop the inner city with diverse approaches and creates recommended seminars of actions as well as guidelines in regard to the urban development of Magdeburg's city centre that can be used by the municipality. (Dewaele et al., 2019, p. 32)

From its creation in 2018 until spring 2020, the in:takt was located in an empty shop in the traffic-calmed northern section of the Breite Weg. In the project's self-image, which is also communicated to the outside world, the "in:takt store" thus described is a public, non-commercial, open space and place of diversity and chance, freely accessible to all (cf. Weiner et al., 2019, p. 20, Trans.).

In addition, the initiative sees itself as an alternative experience offer to the predominant shopping spaces (ibid.). Ironically, the relocation of the store into a new place was due to the letting of the previous space to a shopping company and, moreover, the new location is directly opposite the shopping mall Allee-Centre. However, not only has the spatial location changed over time, but also the location within the structures of the OVGU.

**Figure 7 Logo of the project in:takt
"your free space on Breiter Weg"**



The origin of in:takt goes back to the course of study "Cultural Studies, Knowledge Management, Logistics - Cultural Engineering" (KWL), which is currently being phased out and therefore no longer exists in this form – consequently, in:takt is no longer accommodated by it. Instead, in:takt is supported by a university-internal cooperation between the Media Centre and the newly conceived study programme Cultural Engineering and is combined with courses. While the Media Centre is part of the central institution's unit "Media, Communication and Marketing", the course of study

Cultural Engineering is located in Foreign Language Philology which is linked to Institute III - Philology, Philosophy, Sports Science in the Faculty of Human Sciences.

This is also where the so-called accompanying seminar is located, which has a new name every semester and is linked to the in:takt project, as well as taking place in

the in:takt store. Its name in summer semester 2020 was "in:takt - urban offers" and it was held – as always – by the architect Hendrik Weiner, who is also co-founder of the in:takt project and CEO of the company "raumdialog - gebaute kommunikation". In the OVGU's university information system, in which the events of the respective semesters are listed and arranged structurally and in terms of personnel, the accompanying seminar is also linked to the block seminar "Magdeburg Urban? - Chances and Projects".

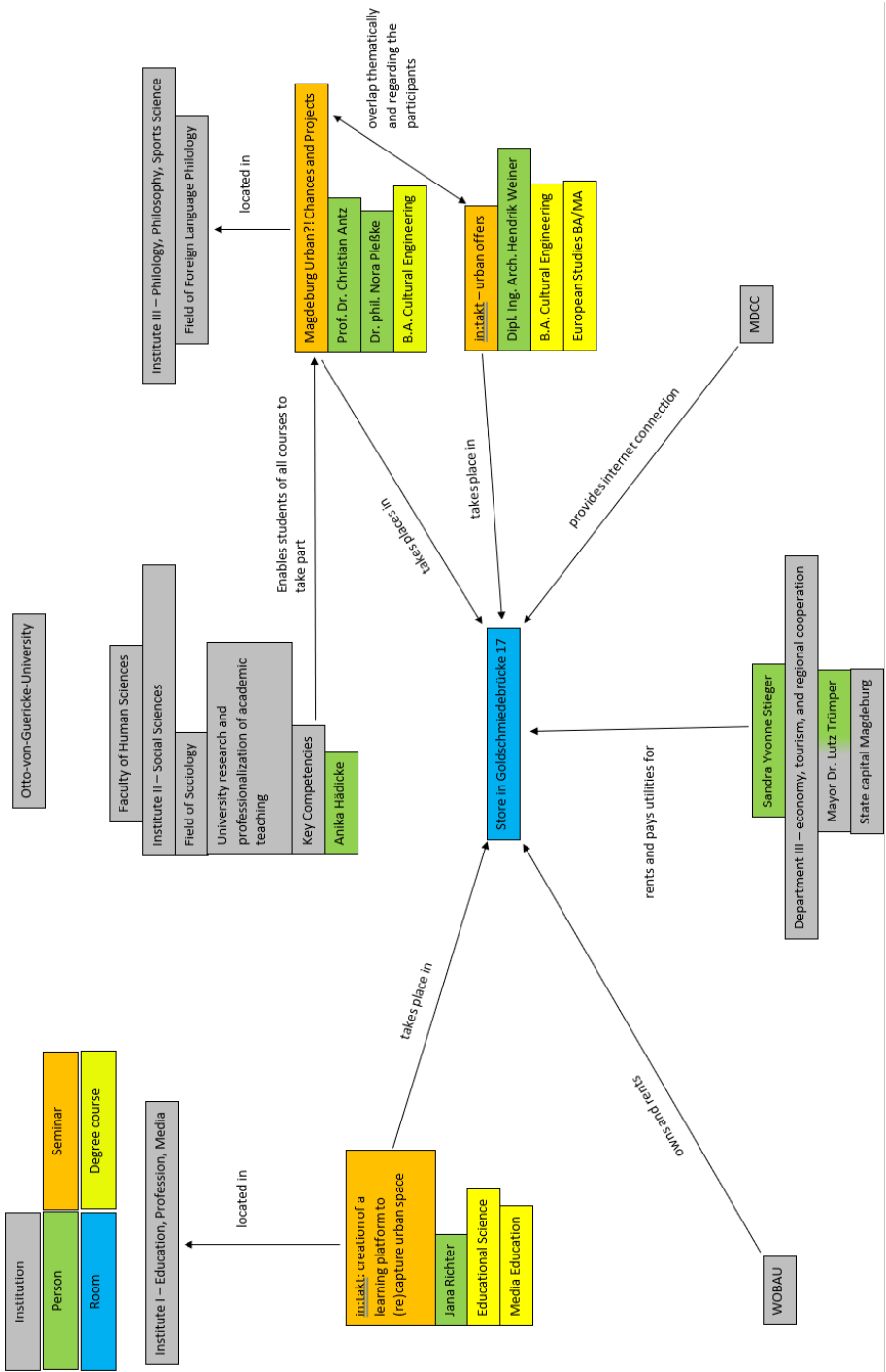
A further seminar, which took place in the summer semester 2020 at in:takt (project and store), illustrates the connection to the media centre, which is also involved. The seminar with the name "in:takt: Creation of a learning platform for the (re)capture of urban space" is conducted by Jana Richter, who is employed as a lecturer both in the media centre and at Institute I - Education, Profession, and Media. In 2017, Jana Richter was nominated as one of ten Magdeburgers of the year - an honour she received for her commitment as producer of the play "Wir sind wir" (We are we), "which was staged together with students from Magdeburg and [...] young refugees [and] the Cuban director Xiomara Calderón" (Volksstimme 2017, Trans.).

Before taking a closer look at the accompanying seminar and sub-projects, it is important to briefly summarise the previous locations and present them in a network diagram (see Figure 8). In:takt is an initiative that has emerged from the cooperation of actors from the OVGU, the city administration of Magdeburg, and local companies (WOBAU, MDCC) and operates a store in the old town quarter of Magdeburg. In this store, various seminars of different study programmes and institutes, as well as facilities of the OVGU, takes place alongside collaborative events which are not directly part of the teaching (and therefore not shown in the graphic). The discourse, i.e. the accepted social reality of "vacancy in the old town of Magdeburg as a problem", provides the context and starting point for the cooperative project and a conducive condition for the store, which in turn provides the space for the seminars and events. These in turn relate their contents to the vacancy discourse.

This provides only a rough overview of the things and connections already mentioned and is a snapshot of the summer semester 2020, i.e. it does not capture changes since 2018. For a much more complex overview of all recorded events, relations, and affiliations with in:takt as a node, we recommend the network graphic, which the in:takt team has created itself and which is publicly available on its website¹⁵ (cf. in:takt Cooperation and Network).

¹⁵ <https://intakt17magdeburg.wordpress.com/ueber-uns/kooperationspartnerinnen/>

Figure 8 In:takt Network Diagram



The initiative in:takt consists of students, mostly from the Cultural Engineering course, who run a store in Magdeburg's city centre. In:takt also serves as a laboratory and experimental space for urban development projects. The initiative wants to be a free space for the citizens of Magdeburg and also a network node for organised civil society from politics, art, and culture. To this end, the initiative organises its own events in the store and the city centre, some of which are described below. Though it organises its own events, the store will remain as free as possible so that other groups can rent it for events for a short period of time free of charge - citizens' meetings, coffee afternoons, games evenings, and information events by various NGOs are among them.

In:takt is not labelled as service-learning, Engaged Learning, or similar. Nonetheless, an article in *Handbuch Qualität in Studium, Lehre und Forschung* (Handbook Quality in Study, Teaching and Research) entitled (translated) "Cooperation between universities and their regional environment in teaching: 'Engaged Learning' for socially responsible academic education" (Chmelka et al., in publication) and a "Third Mission Meeting" with the participation of the lecturers responsible for in:takt show that:

- There are internal university efforts to further establish Third Mission and Engaged Learning as part of it;
- Links can be established between in:takt and Engaged Learning; and
- The in:takt project as such is oriented in "the scientific concepts of research through design [...] project based research [and] the Anglo-Saxon tradition of design build and live projects." (Weiner et al., 2019, p. 16, Trans.).

The focus on "design" is probably due to the fact that the in:takt initiator Hendrik Weiner is an architect, the aim of the project is urban development or revitalisation, and it attempts to achieve this starting from the spatial presence in the city centre through the store.

So, this considered, is in:takt Engaged Learning in the sense of our definition? Yes, because it contains all elements of the definition:

Definition elements Engaged Learning	Statements from Hendrik Weiner in:takt
Students apply theory learned at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to a context outside of HEI	<p>“connect the theoretical education with a practical part”</p> <p>“as a student [...] you can change something right directly and practical”</p> <p>“it’s [...] a strong mix of theory input and practical problem input”</p> <p>“[the students] get some experiences they cannot get in the university itself”</p>
Addressing societal concerns, challenges, or needs	<p>“the city likes to have it as a project which is development-pusher [...] of the local business area, to get more attention”</p> <p>“you get this confronting with the reality problems and questions”</p> <p>“We can test some things which administrations or companies cannot test [...] we can push some new ideas; we can push some discourses in the city”</p>
Producing knowledge in an equitable, mutually beneficial partnership	<p>“bringing university and city together [...] Every competence [that] is based in university can be connected to a competence in city”</p> <p>“I started to talk to them and then we started to try and make some collaboration”</p> <p>“the same big aim but beyond this they have very different viewpoints of them”</p> <p>“three sectors [...] university [...] administration of the city [...] housing association [...] this is the base”</p> <p>“without these partners we cannot make this kind of projects”</p> <p>“compromise process”</p> <p>“walking together is a kind of exchange of different approaches and possibilities then it can be very successful for everybody I think”</p>

Partnership is, as already discussed in the CaST State-of-the-Art Report Literature Review¹⁶, the basic prerequisite for the realisation of an Engaged Learning initiative. In the case of in:takt, it also seems to be one of the concerns, challenges, and needs to be addressed and even the subject of theory application. This is because in:takt deals with questions of living together in the public space of an urban society.

¹⁶ <https://www.cast-euproject.eu/download/intellectual-outputs/17/>

4.2.1. In:takt – Urban Offers Seminar

The seminar took place in the summer semester 2020.

The accompanying seminar [...] frames this work [of the in:takt project]. It is open to all(!) interested OVGU students. It is interdisciplinary, transformative and is aimed at cultural innovation. Based on the project-based research approach, it imparts system, goal and transformation knowledge (e.g.: How does the city work? How do I develop a project? How can urban spaces be enlivened?) and asks guiding questions (e.g.: What is urbanity? What does participation mean? How does (intermediate) use succeed?). It calls for action and offers direct contacts to the city administration, housing association, urban development actors and the local environment.

Tasks in the seminar are the conception and implementation of own topic-related sub-projects, theoretical reflection on texts and the operation of the site. To this end, it provides a mix of analytical and design methods of design research, implementation practices and relevant content on urban space, urbanity, civil society and co-design. (cf. in:takt learning content, Trans.)

4.2.2. Structure of the Initiative

The seminar took place every fortnight, between April 14, 2020 and July 8, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the OVGU administration in response to it, part of the communication took place via video call services. Due to the necessary relocation of the store from Breite Weg 28 to Goldschmiedebrücke 17, a large part of the students' work consisted of organising and carrying this out.

About 30 students from different study programmes (Cultural Engineering, Educational Sciences, Psychology, German Studies, Computer Science, and Social Sciences) took part in the seminar. The seminar, understood as "accompaniment" to the project, was also described as the "backbone of in:takt" as well as its "motor" by a student who is also part of the student organisational team of the store. It provides "theoretical input" and brings "new blood" into the project. The fact that the seminar attracts new students with each semester in which it takes place - under a different name - means that some of them usually "get stuck", i.e. they get involved in the store and project beyond the accompanying seminar. Consequently, the accompanying seminar takes on an introductory and renewal function within the overall structure of in:takt, as both new (learning) content and new committed students are introduced.

The accompanying seminar changes the face(s) of in:takt with every new semester. This has to do with the fact that it always attracts new students with new ideas and their own sub-projects, and that the contract for the use of the store may expire or even be cancelled, which as described above has already happened and resulted in a move. This makes it difficult to describe concretely and comprehensively what in:takt exactly is. The general description as "a space for new ideas and cooperation with local communities and NGOs", however, is not sufficient to give a vivid impression of in:takt's work.

For these reasons, two concrete sub-projects are described in this chapter - the in:dialog and the Critical Sunday Cinema. These two sub-projects were chosen because they were developed and implemented by students of the accompanying seminar. It should be noted, however, that a large part of in:takt's work consists of being a free and central space for all kinds of people and interest groups. Associations such as ProAsyl and BUND regularly hold their own events in the in:takt store. In addition, game evenings or music events of loose groups take place. Students of the in:takt team, most of whom are recruited from the accompanying seminar, are responsible for the allocation of dates and rooms as well as for on-site supervision and instruction.

4.2.3. How the Community is Matched with the Initiative

Before we can pursue the question of how the community is matched with in:takt, we have to clarify the question of what, or rather who, the community actually is. City administration and WOB AU are not counted as part of the community at this point, as they are already partners and thus an integral part of the project.

From conversations with the in:takt Team (a group of students) no clear definition can be found. Instead, community is understood "on two levels" in a "broader sense" and a "narrower sense". Community in a broader sense: Synonym for the target group of in:takt, understood as the inhabitants of the city of Magdeburg. Community in the narrower sense: People who have already come into contact with in:takt, e.g. via social media channels or who are regularly on site and support in:takt in one form or another.

Community (in the narrower sense) is therefore only created from the realised and repeated contact between actors of the target group (=community in a broader sense) and in:takt actors in the space of the store or via digital communication platforms and channels.

"Somebody has to take the initiative. It does not come from itself" (Hendrik Weiner). However, the contact can be initiated by in:takt or by the target group.

On the part of in:takt: The students of the accompanying seminar are invited to realise their own sub-projects in which new ideas can be tried out and integrated into the overall project. As the students are partly dependent on external support for the implementation of these sub-projects, they actively establish contacts with persons and organisations in Magdeburg (= target group = community in a

broader sense) or advertise their sub-projects in digital and physical space, which makes people of the target group feel addressed and establish contact.

On the part of the target group: Persons and organisations of the target group come across digitally or analogue communicated offers or reports of in:takt and make contact. The store itself also arouses the curiosity of some people to make contact, although this is rarely the case. "S: Many people look, few go in // I: Why is this so? // The threshold is too high" (from a conversation with a student of in:takt). Whether this is a physical or a psychological threshold or both, and how both thresholds are connected, is a question that could be dealt with in terms of room-sociology.

4.2.4. How the Initiative is Resourced

Big ideas and very limited resources. (Hendrik Weiner)

The following elements are understood in terms of resources: time, finances, credit points, room, and reputation. These are partly to be understood for the whole in:takt and not only for this seminar. At the same time, it should already have become clear that the (accompanying) seminar can hardly be viewed in isolation from in:takt. In terms of time, Hendrik Weiner has stated that, "without the commitment of the students, this would not work." The offer from students consists of two semester hours per week (SWS) every fortnight and it has been noted that "a lot of free time from all participants" (student) is necessary. Up to 8 CP (1 CP corresponds to a workload of 30 working hours, whereas the study regulations of the subjects usually require 30 CP per semester) are given for the in:takt initiative. Indeed, "CP is our resource - without it nobody comes" (Hendrik Weiner).

At an OVGU-internal Third-Mission Strategy Meeting on September 30, 2020, the in:takt was described as a "precarious project" and "leisure project", as neither the paid time of the teaching assignment nor the time of the students in the seminar, which is remunerated with credit points, is sufficient to keep the project running. Lecturer and initiator Hendrik Weiner justified his additional unpaid commitment to in:takt by saying that his architecture studies had taught him that urban development was important.

In terms of finances, OVGU provides a lectureship for Hendrik Weiner (2 semester hours per week); costs for the in:takt website domain, and the passing on the GEMA estate. City-Administration provided €8,036 in support in 2020; of this amount, €550 will be paid in rent (monthly) and additional costs. The rent goes toward the room used; a two-storey store area (approx. 200 square metres) including cellar in Goldschmiedebrücke 17. WOBAU gives a reduction of the rent to the service charges; MDCC provides free internet connection; Getränkefeinkost (a shop for speciality drinks) gives discounted conditions for buying drinks; and the community (in a narrower sense) provides on a donation basis.

Finally, reputation is something to be considered with the in:takt initiative. Appreciation and recognition vary greatly depending on the partner or community member and there are no surveys on this. Nevertheless, reputation should remain mentioned as a resource, since the existence of in:takt depends largely on the gifts of the partners. A bad reputation with one of the partners could therefore endanger the overall project. Accordingly, the direct actors of in:takt strive to satisfy the partners and trying to expand the community-network in order to become better known and therefore more stable.

On this subject, the lecturer Hendrik Weiner says:

A lot of hierarchies, you have to meet quite the highest person in the hierarchy because they only can decide often. And to reach them sometimes is not easy.

Ok we have a problem, we have a conflict, let's talk about [...] but sometimes it's not possible to talk about because 'oh we've made a mistake, sorry', and then not talk again,

I explain to our partners that we are a student project; we can do this; we cannot do this.

We can also be not successful it's no problem, but then we have to explain a lot more than comparing to a normal seminar in the university.

4.2.5. Outputs of the Initiative

The main output of the project is the publicly accessible and designable space, which would not be without the project. The included elements¹⁷ transform the room in a special way and even the walls or their use as design space is an output in the sense of a publication or a contribution to the environment. Sub-projects, in which ideas and formats for revitalising the inner city are tested, reflected, and documented, are also an output of in:takt. The spectrum of sub-projects ranges from a flowerbed on wheels, a summer party with music and make-up for children on the streets, the design of the shop windows, do-it-yourself workshops on waste avoidance, to a market for books, clothes, and plants. Two of these projects will be discussed in more detail in the next sections.

¹⁷ Examples include: bar counter (on donation basis); showcase for the exhibition of objects; walls as exhibition space for photos and pictures; large room, suitable for building a stage or large circles of chairs; smaller room with travelling library and free clothing exchange; small room for e.g. seminars; daylight studio for painting; toilet.

4.2.5.1. In:dialog

Figure 9 Fish-bowl-format for open discussion (photo has been taken in the old location of the store)



The sub-project in:dialog is, as the name already suggests, a series of events to bring people into a common dialogue. The occasion is always a concrete question or theme – past examples include:

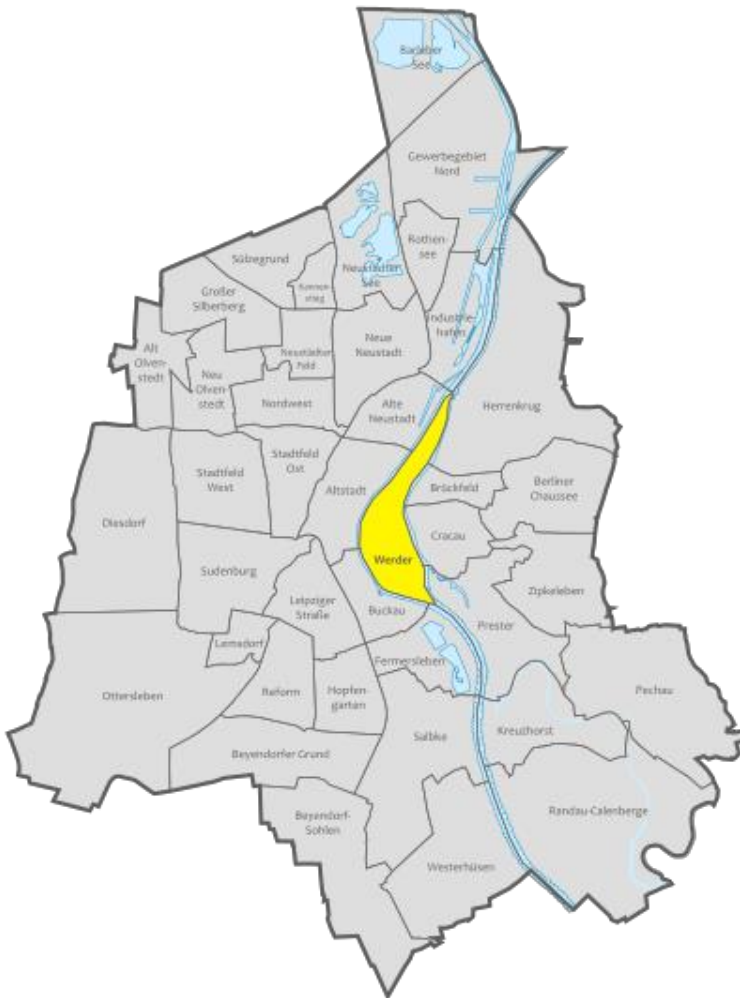
- “Different perspectives on the revival of the city centre through open cultural offers.” (07.02.2019)
- "How can idealistic values be integrated into society? Commerce with heart - a mere utopia or reality?" (15.06.2019)
- "What is an ecovillage, and can the concept also be implemented in the city?" (22.06.2019)
- The "future of the Grüne Stadtmarsch" (green city march). (08.01.2020)

The students invite speakers to each event who either have a recognised expertise in the respective topic context and/or are involved in the specific challenge. Short documentations of the events are kept by the students and partly published on the website. A specific example from one of the events, the in:dialog on the "future of the Grüne Stadtmarsch" is given below.

The “Grüne Stadtmarsch” is a project of the housing cooperatives MWG and WOBAU – the latter is, as discussed, one of the partners of in:takt. The project envisages the construction of a new residential area on the island known as Werder (situated between two arms of the Elbe; picture 4.3). The project partners advertise their project on various digital and analogue media platforms and asked the in:takt team to hold an information event in the store, probably to win over local citizens for the project.

The in:takt team's response to the intention to advertise the event was to turn it into a critical forum - the in:dialog. In addition to representatives of MWG and WOBAU, they also invited spokespersons of BUND (Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland = Association for the Environment and Nature Conservation Germany) and the local citizens' initiative "Save Rotehornpark!¹⁸".

Figure 10 "Location of District Werder in Magdeburg" by Jörg Schönebaum.
Licence: CC BY-SA 3.0



¹⁸ The Rotehornpark is a 200-hectare area in the central to southern Werder, covering 359 hectares.

In the evening of January 8, 2020, around 60-80 people attend the in:dialog - all seats were taken and the store was completely full. At about 18:30 Hendrik Weiner and a student named Jennifer start the event after several people from the audience loudly call for it. The in:takt is presented as a self-governing project of the students and as a free space for teaching, but also for civic initiatives.

The executive director of the MWG starts its presentation "Information and framework data Green City March". There are isolated intermediate remarks in the form of ironic laughter.

After about ten minutes, a representative of BUND begins his presentation with the words: "This project, but not at this point." He refers to climate change, for which he hears a loud interjection, "this is absolute nonsense what you are talking about" from an elderly man who is asked to be quiet by the people around him. He also refers to the risk of flooding in the construction area, even though the last great flood was in 2013, and the cooling function of open spaces for the city centre. The next speaker is a representative of the citizens' initiative: "Can you imagine New Yorkers building on their Central Park? Not me! [energetic clapping from the audience]".

After all lectures have been completed, the student moderator leads into the panel discussion and, at the request of the audience, opens the microphone for direct questions to the discussants. A total of seven question rounds with a total of 17 questions are introduced and some of them are discussed energetically on the stage and with the audience.

The event ends at around 20:20. From the students' point of view, the evening is considered a success, as the controversy was given an appropriate stage on which the pros and cons could be discussed. The spokesperson for the board of MWG, which is involved in the Green City March project, said of the evening: "I don't think there has ever been such public participation in Magdeburg in this form either" and thanked the in:takt for organising the event and the opportunity to present and discuss the Green City March project there (cf. Forum zum Grünen Stadtmarsch, Trans.).

4.2.5.2. *Critical Sunday Cinema*

The idea is to watch a film together on Sunday evenings on a currently controversial topic. As the film screenings are free of charge, we give all those interested the opportunity to inform themselves about various topics through these films and to enter an exchange after the films.

The different films are intended to sensitise the audience to topics such as racism, sexism, homophobia etc. Most of the films are documentaries with high educational standards.

'Critical' here stands for the illumination of controversial topics in society that are taken up in films and for the critical examination of topics in the films themselves, for example in the form of a documentary. (Weiner et al., 2019, S. 77, Trans.)

Figure 11 Critical Sunday Cinema. Welcome to Sodom; your smartphone is already here



Like in:dialog, the Critical Sunday Cinema was a sub-project by a student from the accompanying seminar in winter semester 2018/19. The event took place seven times in total in 2019. In the summer semester 2019, four of these events took place. These were extended by workshops and a so-called KūfA (kitchen for all), which resulted from a collaboration with the project “Kiez zweinull” of the “Landesvereinigung kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung Sachsen-Anhalt e.V.” (state association for cultural child and youth education Saxony-Anhalt). Unfortunately, the format was not continued after that, because the student who initiated it left in:takt for her further education.

4.2.6. How the Initiative is Evaluated

The evaluation of the accompanying seminar takes place on two levels: Via the official evaluation of the OVGU by means of questionnaire surveys of the students. This survey has not yet been evaluated. Open feedback round in the seminar and individual assessment of each student to Hendrik Weiner (no insight granted). The assessment of the cooperation partners on in:takt (city administration and WOB AU) is not collected, but only reconstructed by means of attitudes, reactions, and statements.

4.3. Engagement with Participants

The following explanations refer to an example of a street theatre workshop that took place between 12 and 18 October 2020 at in:takt. Fourteen students from the subjects of media education, cultural engineering, and educational sciences

worked together with a trio of lecturers on a theatre play. From Monday to Friday, the students worked daily from 09:00 to 19:00 hours in order to be able to present their own play on the streets of Magdeburg's city centre on Saturday and Sunday. This special format is due to the Corona pandemic. The actual winter semester had not even begun at that time. However, it was already foreseeable that it was rather unlikely that attendance teaching would be possible throughout the entire semester. To create a street theatre workshop followed by a play in digital format is hardly possible with today's means. Thus, the workshop was held before the second corona wave in Germany, subject to the requirements safety guidelines.

4.3.1. Students

The students of the different disciplines were able to obtain 4-6 CP for this workshop. To obtain 6 CP the students must complete the entire workshop, write a diary of about two pages a day, perform their play at the weekend, and finally, after the workshop, write a 15-page paper on a selected (and in the workshop discussed) theatre theorist.

At the beginning of the workshop, the students are involved in designing their own rules of the game, which are:

- Let go and get involved,
- Self-reflect,
- Not laugh at someone,
- Condemn no one, and
- Every idea is a good idea.

Although many of the students do not yet know each other, the group grows together steadily after the first day. This can be seen in the relaxed interaction during the workshop and in the breaks with each other, in the sharing of their own, sometimes very intimate, experiences and objects, as well as in the joint bar visit after the end of the workshop. The own experiences and objects are the focus of the workshop and form the basis for the basic theme of the play, the individual scenes, and characters as well as their props.

Nevertheless, the theories and the ideas and concepts of one's own play are controversially discussed, sometimes over a period of several hours in small groups, which refer to each other in arguments, distance themselves from each other, and try to win majorities. The initially rather general basic theme of "role models" becomes more and more specific through one's own experiences - often from everyday life in Magdeburg (in the tram, on the street, in the disco, in the bar, at shared flat parties) as well as one's own objects, and the message increasingly becomes a mirror of the living environment.

The question of how to get people on the street to stop and watch is as much on the students' minds as the question of how self-reflected experiences can be reflected to the audience. To find out more about the potential audience, the first expedition to the "outside world" of Magdeburg's inner city is already on the second day. The students are to accompany passers-by inconspicuously and thus observe excerpts from their daily lives, which they will finally bring to bear in their own play.

One encounter that is particularly noteworthy in this context is the one between a student who has chosen a supposedly homeless man as the object of observation. The short performance in front of his fellow students and the lecturers, sitting on the floor, apathetically bobbing, and muttering soundlessly with his lips, holding a cup in his hand upwards, is so moving that for a short time silence prevails in the room. After the short performance, another student asks: "but did you at least give him something for watching him for half an hour?" whereupon the student answers: "Yes, I gave him something."

This is a prime example of what a student sums up as follows: "[This] is very different from university otherwise." Such encounters and interactions with fellow human beings outside the University, outside one's own "bubble", occur even more frequently during the workshop and, after initial shyness and uncertainty, awaken in the students a joy in showing themselves and their own work, getting direct feedback, and entering conversations.

4.3.2. Community

The stakeholders in the true sense, i.e. the city administration or WOBAU, were not taken into account in the workshop. The community in the narrower sense arose here only performative in the act of street play, in which passers-by were transformed into an audience.

Every now and then, even during the first exercises, people stop and watch in the streets and squares. Some ask what the students are doing here, engage them in conversations, others clap or comment on their applause: "You are great."

On the last day, the second day of the performance, a reporter from a local newspaper joined them and wrote a newspaper article about "Street theatre about clichés and exclusion - students from Otto-von-Guericke University on the town squares."

Figure 12 Newspaper article in the Magdeburger Volksstimme. Monday, 19 October 2020, No. 243, text and photo by Martin Rieß

Straßentheater über Klischees und Ausgrenzung

Studenten der Otto-von-Guericke-Universität auf den Plätzen der Innenstadt unterwegs

Von Martin Rieß
Altstadt • Schwarz gekleidete Jugendliche mit weißen Masken, die sich in der Magdeburger Innenstadt bewegen – eine solche Szene ruft auch schon einmal die Polizei auf den Plan. So geschehen am Sonnabend am Hauptbahnhof. Und dabei handelte es sich tatsächlich um eine Szene – und zwar die des Straßentheater-Stücks „Rollenbilder“. Diese haben Studenten der Uni im Rahmen eines Seminars unter Leitung von Jana Richter und mit Unterstützung unter anderem von Theaterpädagogin Kerstin Reichelt in fünf Vorstellungen am Sonnabend und einer am Sonntag auf verschiedene Plätze der Stadt gebracht.

Zu sehen sind Gewalt und Aggressivität, aber auch Verständigung

und Austausch. Jana Richter erläutert, dass die 15 Akteure das Stück selbst entwickelt und geschrieben und innerhalb einer Woche in bis zu zehn Stunden dauernden Proben tagen einstudiert haben. Am Anfang habe die Idee gestanden, sich mit Klischees auseinanderzusetzen. Zusammengekommen ist eine Collage aus Erfahrungen, die die Seminarteilnehmer selbst gesammelt haben.

Die Herausforderung des Straßentheaters, für das sogar ein Körpertraining auf dem Stundenplan stand, war nicht zuletzt, weitgehend auf Dialoge zu verzichten und stattdessen mit Bildern zu arbeiten. Denn auf der Straße muss man zum Beispiel wegen des Verkehrslärms damit rechnen,

dass einzelne Textpassagen nicht zu verstehen wären.

Unter denen, die am Stück mitgewirkt haben, war auch Anna Peggau, die aus Hildesheim stammt und im dritten Semester Medienbildung studiert. Sie sagt: „Ich habe bei den Proben und den Aufführungen sehr viel über mich selbst gelernt.“ Zum Beispiel darüber, wie man mit dem Lampenfieber vor den Auftritten umgeht. Die Studentin, die an der Trommel den Takt für das Stück vorgab, ergänzt: „Da ging es uns allen ähnlich.“

Ob das Stück nochmals gezeigt wird, ist offen. Jana Richter hält es für denkbar, die etwa eine Viertelstunde dauernde Aufführung im Rahmen einer anderen Veranstaltung in der Festung Mark noch einmal zu zeigen.



Mit Straßentheater waren Studenten der Uni am Wochenende zum Beispiel auf dem Hasselbachplatz zu erleben. Foto: Martin Rieß

4.3.3. Staff

The trio of lecturers consists of a documentary filmmaker who is employed as a lecturer at the University and who has brought on board the other two; a former film actress and now body coach and a drama teacher who is also a clinic clown. In the first meeting two months before the actual workshop and in the second preparatory meeting one week before, not only the work tasks, procedures, and objectives are discussed, but also personal motivations are articulated. The former film actress says that she does not want students to feel the same way as she does in her job, which is why she is keen in her new profession as a body coach to support both the "tuning in" to the actual workshop, the "finding the set", and the "landing together" at each end of the day. The sharing of personal experiences, up to and including showing the first film role of the actress, should ensure that cooperation with the students is as low in hierarchy as possible and characterised by mutual respect.

Although the University employee has already worked with the other two, the work in the workshop as a trio is seen as a new experience and is occasionally discussed with the researcher who accompanied the workshop. The joint preparation of the room, disinfecting the yoga mats, which the students use to sit on, and masking the mirrors to prevent distractions and self-doubts out of vanity, is then also understood as a "team-building measure." Nonetheless, there are occasional minor conflicts due to differences of opinion and situations experienced as transgressions of one's own responsibility. For example, when it comes to whether the play is performed in the mode of an invisible theatre (i.e. the audience does not know that it is part of a play) or not. The lecturer employed at the University argues not only against the students, but also against her colleagues:

J: "We are not just us; we are the university [...] Heads can roll [...] and then the rector must be informed [...] I would like to keep my job."

Elsewhere, a conflict arises because one lecturer calls on students to submit to the other lecturer's direction for the day. This then intervenes:

K1: "You have given me an authority here that I have to work for myself [...] It seems to me as if a mom is sitting in front of me telling me how to do my job."

Such conflicts are dealt with in the presence of the students, who react sensitively to them and sometimes have an appeasing effect. This may be rather unpopular in academic teaching, but it involves the students directly in the teaching situation or, more precisely, in the production of teaching, which does not only consist of imparting knowledge but also of negotiating, discussing, clarifying, and changing. Moreover, it is very much in the spirit of street theatre, which, as one student notes during a text discussion, understands the "dirt of the world as authenticity."

The days are evaluated every evening among the lecturers and a final reflection discussion takes place around a month and a half after the workshop. Experience combined with openness to new things, it becomes clear, are important not only for the students but also for the lecturers when it comes to new Engaged Learning formats. Engaged Learning, it seems, requires teachers to be able to "constantly react from your gut" like one lecturer says while another lecturer adds "that I trust my work is the basis that it works." The origin of Engaged Learning from experiential learning becomes clear when one of the teachers says, one needs "enough experience to pull something out of the drawer."

4.4. Added Value for Impact

4.4.1. What Worked Well and What Didn't in the Initiative

The in:takt is a free space for Engaged Learning and teaching as well as for the citizens of Magdeburg and interest groups from the fields of culture, civil society, politics, and environment. The fact that such a space exists is largely due to committed individuals who, as spokespersons for their organisations (primarily the University and city administration), have engaged in a creative exchange, explored possibilities, and finally seized opportunities. This personal commitment of individuals is both the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of the project.

It is the greatest strength because the commitment of the teachers, the city councillors, the students, and the community in the narrower sense not only keeps the project running despite limited resources, but also develops it organically. An example of this is the externally initiated relocation of the store, which involved a

complete dismantling, transport, and a new start in a new location and was managed in times of a pandemic.

It is the greatest weakness, because the loss of even one committed individual can mean the complete end. The loss of the initiator, lecturer, (conflict) mediator, and advocate Hendrik Weiner would be fatal at this point. The retirement of Rainer Nitsche, the municipal alderman responsible for the project, had recently started a conflict about the continuation of in:takt. The new alderman Sandra Yvonne Stieger takes a more critical view of the initiative and makes a transparent and regular evaluation of the initiative's work, concretised in figures and facts, a condition for further funding by the city.

It seems that the fluctuation of students is well absorbed by the accompanying seminar which starts every semester. While this may be true for the existence of committed students with new ideas, it is not a solution for the sustainability of already established ideas in the form of sub-projects. Even grown sub-projects such as Critical Sunday Cinema will come to nothing if the original idea generators and implementers leave.

NP: We have plenty of ideas, there is no shortage of them. HW: Yes, but they don't come down to earth. (Hendrik Weiner to Nora Pleßke during a meeting about third mission).

Interdisciplinarity is another important issue. When students and lecturers of different subjects learn, teach, and get involved in in:takt, the pool of available competences grows and ideas and synergy effects are conceivable. With the cultural engineers and the media education scientists, two hybrid disciplines are represented at in:takt, which could be easily linked with other disciplines. Computer scientists, mechanical engineers, teachers, and even biologists would be an enrichment for the in:takt team and thus also for the city centre of Magdeburg. Unfortunately, "[we] are reaching the limits of the curriculum [...] Fixed thematic projects stifle ideas, because everything has to fit into the narrow thematic concept." (Hendrik Weiner). There is a need to open disciplinary curricula and enable crossover seminars and projects.

The possibility of temporary use of vacant WOBAU rooms by in:takt has helped the project to exist, but at the same time it is also the sword of Damocles to its end. Without a permanent contract of use with a guaranteed right to stay, WOBAU can and will force in:takt out of its premises as soon as a paying tenant is found for the property. In such cases, WOBAU offers new rooms for interim use, as has already happened, but this is neither sustainable nor motivating for the in:takt team. After all, a move means a lot of effort with little return and is contrary to permanence in the cityscape and in the perception of the urban society.

A great chance for in:takt and Engaged Learning is already at one point or another mentioned in current discourse within the University about the so-called Third Mission. Representatives of various institutions and chairs (and also of in:takt) met for the first time on September 30, 2020 to initiate a joint strategy and a joint

project, which will not only maintain existing projects (such as in:takt) in the medium to long term, but also create staff positions to scan the funding landscape and gather and coordinate committed actors and groups.

A potential risk could arise from the failed application of Magdeburg as European Capital of Culture 2025. Many local efforts in the field of culture, and this may include in:takt, were designed to achieve the title. If the interest in revitalising the city centre through alternative projects fails to materialise now, financial and personnel support could also dry up before the project has a stable foundation to stand on its own.

We know from conversations with actors in the sister project schauwerk that there are considerations about founding an association that could be organisationally independent of the University. This is because associations have access to funding that university projects do not have. However, on the one hand, this is still a pipe dream, and on the other hand, it is not a solution for Engaged Learning (which is about students from universities). It is therefore to be hoped, in the spirit of in:takt and Engaged Learning, that the relevant internal university forces will agree on a joint approach to strengthen Third Mission activities as soon as possible.

4.4.2. Facilitating Factors

Committed teachers, interested students, and a city administration open to experimentation in a real laboratory are fundamental to the emergence and existence of in:takt. Beyond that, however, there are other, conducive factors that facilitated the work and cooperation of all those involved.

4.4.2.1. Communication via Digital Media

The exchange among students about the daily happenings in the store occurred via MS Teams and WhatsApp, the joint work on documents via Google Docs, and the public representation via Facebook and Instagram. In short, the possibilities and skills for communication via digital media have proven to be resilience-promoting, especially during COVID-19 and resulting contact restrictions. Seminars and sub-projects could continue to be conducted and further developed, and even short-term concerns could be resolved largely independent of location and time. The lecturers, who are only employed for a small number of hours and some of whom do not live in Magdeburg, were thus able to maintain contact with their students in a way that conserved resources. For the students, who are all digital natives, dealing with digital media and tools is easy. The fact that the internet provider MDCC is a partner of the in:takt and provides it with free wi-fi in the store is an advantage here.

4.4.2.2. Well-connected Advocates

Lecturers who are also practitioners in the fields of culture, business, and politics and who bring their contacts and experience to the work of the in:takt project are extremely beneficial. They serve as intermediaries between the project and other

groups, who then act as partners and promoters of the project and take on public relations and lobbying work for the project. The in:takt alliance network includes local politicians, journalists, culture-freelancers, NGOs, and small businesses in and around Magdeburg. Many of the contacts were provided by well-connected lecturers.

4.4.2.3. Disclosure of Expectations and Demands on Each Other

An in:takt seminar or workshop means additional work for both students and lecturers compared to classical seminars in the University premises. The students in particular are confronted with this reality when theoretical concepts and big ideas turn into small sub-projects whose practical implementation usually turns out to be much more time-consuming than initially thought.

Jana Richter summarised her demands on the students in her seminars as follows: "Doing work with the students for which they have to take responsibility." Since the results of the sub-projects and seminars are made publicly visible and thus contribute to the perception of in:takt, the University, and the image of students in urban society, the level of responsibility exceeds one's own personal level. Failure is explicitly allowed and understood as part of learning, but it also often means justification in front of partners. The high workload, the possibility, and the possible consequences of failure are sometimes more or less directly mentioned by the lecturers at the beginning of each in:takt seminar. This usually leads to the number of participating students shrinking by the second seminar date. The remaining students, who have not been deterred by this, work mostly with commitment and proudly present their sub-projects and results at the end of the semester. The disclosure of demands and expectations and the resulting shrinking of the participating students are beneficial in that the lecturers can concentrate on guiding motivated students instead of having to create work motivation during the semester.

4.4.3. Broader Societal Impact

Since there has been no systematic evaluation of the project so far and it can only be assumed that a broader impact will unfold and be measured in the long term, the question of this is difficult to answer.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that the in:takt project has created a student-run free space for about two years, which is also used as a real laboratory for teaching. Whether this space contributes to the revitalisation of Magdeburg's city centre and the elimination of vacancies, as desired by the partner city administration, is debatable. What is clear is that the spaces used by in:takt are not empty, that they are also used by non-student groups in a variety of ways and are the starting point for smaller initiatives and events that take place in the public space. Whether this is sufficient in the sense of the partners to speak of inner-city revitalisation or what inner-city revitalisation should mean at all is the pivotal point of the discourse in seminars, workshops, at city council meetings, discussion events, and many more.

So even if the medium- and long-term consequences of in:takt are not yet clear, it can be stated that a small part of the University is actively and directly exchanging ideas with a small part of urban society, shaping the present and negotiating the future. Though this is possibly only a section of a larger picture in which science is becoming more and more involved in shaping civil society.

4.5. Conclusions

Even though the project has been able to hold its own in the face of numerous crises that have threatened its existence for more than two years, its resilience in the long term is rather low, which means that the sustainability of the project is not yet sufficiently assured. The actors of the in:takt team are all too aware of this and can name the tasks that need to be tackled in order to move from the implementation phase to an institutionalisation phase:

1. The documentation of the project and the evaluation of the products and results have to be prepared in terms of proof of usefulness to the partners, especially the municipality, in order to continue to receive yearly funding.
2. The status as an interim use project must be lifted by a proper tenancy agreement.
3. The long-term commitment of the university management to the project can only be achieved if the project fits into the current philosophy of science, i.e. serves the aspirations of a "third mission."

The ability and willingness of both lecturers and students to self-organise beyond the purely remunerated requirement can partially compensate for a lack of resources and is facilitated by digital tools, especially during COVID-19.

The in:takt initiative shows that cooperation between lecturers, students, and external partners is a constant process of negotiation that is largely shaped by individuals acting as spokespersons for their respective groups. Activities of alliance building and public representation serve networking and thus ultimately also the process of autonomy, even if only on an operational-tactical level. Here the project benefits from lecturers who are also well networked outside the University and bring practical experience from other fields.

5. Teaching Placement: Teaching without Borders

University of Parma, Italy
Eleonora Ferraresi

5.1. Introduction

In Italy, Engaged Learning has a relatively recent history. It has emerged over the last 20 years, and its application mainly involves the spheres of education and pedagogy. This is why Engaged Learning is often translated in Italy as *Apprendimento Attivo*, indicating an innovative learning approach where students apply what they are learning to real-world contexts and interact with other perspectives and voices, thus developing more practical and multidisciplinary skills, as well as critical thinking. This concept applies to schools at all levels and also entails teaching and didactic methodology, since traditional lessons or lectures and teacher-centred classrooms seem not able to keep the pace to the challenges and demands of real world and job-related needs. The need to re-think the traditional lectures or classroom by rather privileging active learning in Italy often runs parallel to the growing use of technologies for learning (e.g. videos, working groups and multimedia resources and devices), in order to stimulate the involvement and interaction of students (CRUI, 2018).

Engaged Learning in Italy has actually become a broader term leading to diverse meanings and connotations acquired over time, especially in terms of a deeper interaction with the local community given the growing commitment of both schools and universities towards third-mission and public engagement initiatives. Innovative methodology and approaches are functional to integrate learning with a stronger connection with the local territory and the real world, including societal and environmental issues.

Even though examples of Engaged Learning in Universities are indeed increasing in number, it is still quite difficult to identify a systematic and consistent plan at a national level: some directions can come from the CRUI – the Italian Rectors' Conference, which, in its publications, agrees that the growing need for a cultural and behavioural change required by the third mission policies has to be translated into a complex didactic approach to be applied to university courses, in order to enhance graduates' multidisciplinary skills, their capability to tackle different challenges and forge them as responsible and active citizens (CRUI, 2014). Nevertheless, the decision to convert a course programme into an Engaged Learning initiative, or at least to introduce some elements, is often left at the choice of the professor leading the course, combined with funding, staff and time availability, especially in those fields where practical training is not automatically required. Other larger models offering an Engaged Learning approach have emerged through participation in national, or internationally funded projects. A significant role is played by the local territory and stakeholders as well, whose

specific needs may offer guidance as regards the implementation of vocational training and Engaged Learning courses helping to forge better-skilled future professionals in the predominant sectors of the local area.

In Italy, Engaged Learning often takes the form of Service-Learning, which can be seen as a result of general better articulated national or local policies aimed at promoting active citizenship, civic responsibility, and attention to societal needs among the young.

Even though there is no clear institutionalization at a national level, a few Science Shops exist in Italy as well and generally take the name of “Sportelli della Scienza” or sometimes “Botteghe della Scienza”. Science Shops in Italy are based at University levels in collaboration with research centres and institutes (e.g. CNR – National Research Centre or INFN – National Institute of Nuclear Physics) service of the local community. At present, examples of Science Shops in Italy are found at the Universities of Sassari, Florence, Brescia and the Bruno Kessler Foundation in Trento and they have been implemented thanks to the participation to some of the main Science Shop projects in Europe¹⁹. In late 2019, these four HEIs founded the brand-new Italian Network for Science Shops, RISS - Rete Italiana Sportelli della Scienza, with the objective of promoting and coordinating initiatives for participatory research on the whole territory.

5.1.1. UNIPR and Engaged Learning

In spite of the absence of a clear definition of Engaged Learning, the University of Parma is actually investing in this kind of initiative in line with the third mission institutional strategies and the growing connection with the local territory and community. The University is putting in place actions to enhance innovative teaching methodologies for quality development of the teaching offer.

More specifically, the University policies can be retrieved in the three-year Strategic Plan. In the latest edition of this document, for years 2020-2022, the improvement and innovation of teaching activities is considered essential and, to this purpose, the aim is to increase the development of a greater interdisciplinarity with particular reference to the experimental, scientific and cultural contents, in order to forge highly qualified professional figures, strictly connected to the new issues and needs of the territory and, more widely, the society as a whole. Envisaging the possible implementation of new courses, the University of Parma takes into account the context of the labour market and the peculiarities of the University and its territory: the University intends to pursue an intense and fruitful involvement of the actors of the local production context in order to support a win - win relationship between universities and local businesses and related stakeholders.

¹⁹ The University of Sassari took part in the EU projects PERARES and EnRRICH. The University of Florence created its first Science Shop through the participation in InSPIRES.

The focus is especially on the food area, for the food vocation of the territory of Parma. Nevertheless, other fundamental issues the University aims to address are active citizenship and sustainability. In collaboration with the University Guarantee Committee (CUG), starting from AY 2017-18 and AY 2019-20, new course units have been activated, dealing with topics of particular interest and with a transversal and multidisciplinary value. Such activities were specifically requested by the students, who can choose them among the optional course units regardless of their degree level or disciplinary area. Namely, the list includes: “Equal Opportunities Law” (6CFU); “Woman in Western Political Thought” (6 CFU); “Pedagogy of Differences” (6 CFU); “Citizenship and Constitution” (6 CFU) and “Sustainable Development” (6 CFU).

5.2. Overview of the Chosen Initiative

A successful initiative at the University of Parma which can be considered as an

Figure 13 Logo of “Teaching Placement Teaching without Borders”



example of Engaged Learning is the Teaching Placement project. First implemented in AY 2008-09, this project has been running successfully for more than ten years, attracting students from different parts of Europe.

The “Teaching Placement: Teaching without Borders” initiative is managed by the

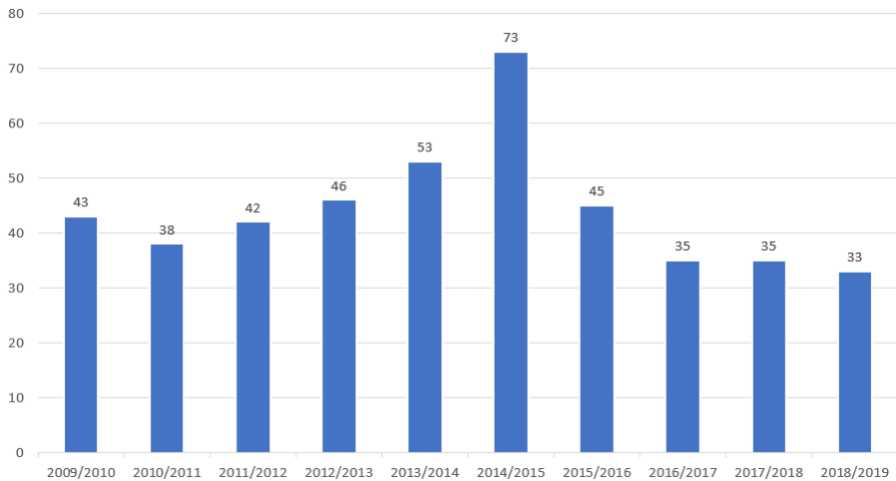
University Internationalization Office and it involves incoming exchange students from EU countries who would like to teach, who need to carry out their traineeship by teaching in a school, or who just want to have an experience in the Italian school system and fully immerse themselves in the Italian life and culture. The initiative consists of a native English, Spanish, French, German, (now also Russian) speakers in support of foreign language teachers in class activities to help students using the foreign language in their school daily routine, thus raising their confidence and fluency, especially as regards their speaking skills. This brings mutual benefits for both the student/assistant and the class: while the former acquires working skills and learns more about Italian language and culture, the school pupils can improve their foreign language proficiency and cultural knowledge while feeling more at ease in front of another student.

The idea of the project dates back to 2007, thanks to Ms Tiziana Cordaro, former Head of the University Service for Erasmus and international exchanges (now Internationalization Office), who proposed that her daughter’s English teacher be supported by an English mother-tongue student, since she was looking for a

native speaker assistant. This experience was so appreciated that, the following year, thanks to an agreement between the University, the Municipality of Parma, the Local Teaching Authority and the local schools of Parma city and province, the Teaching Placement project was born. The experimentation started in 2008 with 10 schools (primary and first-level secondary schools) and 23 students and the project coordination was given to Dr Antonella Cortese, who has successfully guided the initiative in all its editions.

From then on, the numbers have grown and generally remained stable at around 30 – 40 participants, with the exception of a peak of 73 applicants in AY 2014-15. The last full edition of AY 2018-19 involved 33 students. The number of schools have risen as well, accounting now more than 18 schools in Parma and its province (in detail, 18 among primary, first- and second-cycle secondary schools plus kindergartens).

Figure 14 Number of Teaching Placement students per year



Despite most applicants coming from the Humanities or Education areas, the project is actually available to all exchange students in Parma, regardless of their course. The participants generally come from EU countries, as Erasmus exchange students for traineeships, but every year there are applicants from the USA as well, thanks to a collaboration with the Pitzer College and Boston College in Parma.

5.2.1. Structure of the Initiative

Incoming exchange students can choose to experience a Teaching Placement among their traineeship options. In this frame, inbound students have the chance of being part of an international group of young people who can help the school

staff and pupils by sharing their language and culture in local high schools (14-18 years old), middle schools (11-13 years old), elementary schools (6-10 years old) and kindergartens (3-5 years old), usually located in Parma or in the neighbour towns. Every year, a call for applications is published for traineeships covering either a full year or one semester. In this specific case, it is a school year, going from September to the end of May.

Applicants must be native speaker of one of the languages taught in the schools in Parma: English, Spanish, French and German. Russian has been recently added as well. Second-language speakers of one (or more) of the required languages can be admitted too, provided that they have the C1 level of the CEFR (proved by a certificate and further validated through a Skype interview).

In turn, each school participating to the project fills in a form where it indicates the main disciplinary area (Humanities, Science, Pedagogy), the language/s needed, a brief description and duration of the activity and the teacher/tutor contacts. Upon these requests, the required profiles are drawn and reported in the call for applications, with the necessary requirements, the school assigned and the number of scholarships allocated for the same profile. A University Evaluation Committee appointed by the University Rector evaluates the received applications and draws a list of pre-selected candidates who are then called for a Skype interview to acquire details about competence, motivation and language proficiency.

Candidates who are awarded a Teaching Placement Scholarship are asked to:

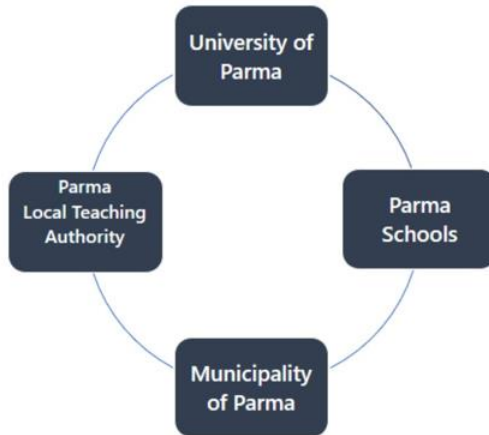
- Attend 12 hours of introductory training at the University of Parma;
- Work in one of the appointed schools for 45 hours (or 25 in case of one semester) per week in classroom activities supporting a foreign language teacher;
- Assist learners with language use, especially as regards conversation;
- Engage learners in a European or international intercultural perspective;
- Motivate learners and help foster their skills in a foreign language; and
- Produce the teaching material in collaboration with the teacher/tutor.

The selected candidates are not expected to lead a class on their own. Nonetheless, they are expected to prepare and lead lessons or discussions with pupils, as agreed with their schoolteacher/tutor and under his/her supervision. At the end of the internship period, the students are asked to write a final essay describing and evaluating their experience, as well as share the teaching materials developed during the internship period. Upon positive assessment, students obtain a final mark and the related ECTS credits for attending the project. During their internship period, the selected candidates may attend a free course of Italian language. The attendance of university lectures is allowed, provided they do not conflict with the internship agenda.

5.2.2. How the Community is Matched with the Initiative

The Teaching Placement is not only an example of Engaged Learning, but also a case of a wider Community-University Partnership: in fact, the project is possible thanks to an agreement with the Municipality of Parma, the Local Teaching Authority, and the schools in Parma and its territory.

Figure 15 The protocol and project stakeholders



This protocol signed with the main local authorities in the field of education has granted the project to be officially recognised among the involved institutions, each of them having a specific role and receiving corresponding benefits. The Municipality of Parma and the Local Teaching Authority have helped the matching and communication between the University and the local schools for the further development of the project. This is valid especially as regards to lower-cycle schools: whereas it is easier for high schools to be informed upon the University initiatives (e.g. thanks to ad-hoc meetings, open days, etc.), this is not true for kindergartens, primary schools, and first-cycle secondary schools, since they do not immediately constitute a group of stakeholders for the University.

5.2.3. How the Initiative is Resourced

The Teaching Placement is funded by internal resources and only involves staff costs and the number of scholarships for students. Depending on the yearly budget allocated for the initiative, the scholarships can have a variable amount and duration, as well as the maximum number of applicants admissible. For the very latest call for AY 2019-20, the resources covered a maximum of 37 four-month scholarships (from February to the end of May), each one accounting for a total amount of €1,800 gross divided into monthly instalments of €450 gross. The

scholarship does not conflict with Erasmus+ SMP grants, which are entirely managed by the selected candidate's home university.

5.2.4. Outputs of the Initiative

The main outputs of the Teaching Placement project are represented by the material prepared by the foreign language teacher and the student/assistant. According to the kind of school, the teaching materials range from basic learning activities for kids to more complex ones for secondary school students. For the latter, a great focus is given on the student's own country and culture, as it generally raises great interest in class. In some cases, Teaching Placement students are actually required not just to teach their own language, but rather to teach another subject in their language: this is true especially for students in fields other than Education or Pedagogy, who, for example, match the profile of a native speaker teaching Maths or Science ("CLIL"- Content and Language Integrated Learning – that is teaching of a subject in a foreign language).

5.2.5. How the Initiative is Evaluated

The evaluation of the initiative is conducted by the student him/herself, the teacher/tutor in the assigned school and the overall feedback by the class. Firstly, students are asked to produce a final essay on their experience, which is then examined by the project coordinator and the International Division in order to assess the impact of the initiative on the applicants and on the school context. The evaluation is also combined with the assessment conducted by the teacher/tutor, who takes into account the student's performance and relational skills. The teacher/tutor are also required to evaluate the general organisation of the project and report their pupils' feedback. Upon all these evaluations, the coordinator can adjust the contents and change some organisational and practical aspects if any criticism occurs. With regard to the students, after completing their traineeship and handing in all the outputs requested, they obtain a final mark (out of 30) and the corresponding ECTS.

5.3. Engagement with Participants

5.3.1. Students

In its call for applications the Teaching Placement is promoted as a "chance to fully immerse yourself in Italian life and in its lively school world". This is what mainly emerges from the students' feedbacks over the different editions of this project: besides representing an opportunity for students to put themselves to the test in a working environment in a foreign country, this initiative has been so positively valued as a way to exchange cultures and ways of life.

In addition to the acquired skills, what most students appreciate from this experience is the relationship with their pupils, often described as “a joy to work with every week”. During the different editions, the project has registered great enthusiasm among the participants, as witnessed by their own words. After their teaching experience, some students even acted as endorsers contributing with videos to promote the project for future applicants.

Words cannot explain the great number of things that I have felt in the classes with you. You have made me enjoy, laugh, feel important, value the little things that life gives you, you have allowed me to teach you, show you my culture, get to know you and learn from you too.

[...] A year that completely changes you, that makes you value people and value yourself, a year to enjoy and learn many things that you will never forget. (Francisco from Spain, who performed his Teaching Placement in a first-cycle secondary school)

A recurring aspect which made the students feel so enthusiastic about this programme is the opportunity to really get in touch with Italian culture and people. The objective of the programme really seems to have been reached:

I am very happy to have stayed there. It's all about the contact that you get to the Italians – firstly to the children, but also to the people they are going to help you in your work. (Constanze, from France – teaching French in a first-cycle secondary school)

We have learned a lot from this experience because we have spread our culture, but in turn we have learned about Italian culture. We have taught something about our career and we have taken an unforgettable experience with both the professors and the pupils. (Barbara and Francesco, from Spain – teaching Spanish in a professional secondary school)

In Parma you are surrounded by authentic Italian culture, you have to speak Italian and I met so many Italian friends that made me really feel like it was an amazing experience there. [...] I also loved working with the kids, they were on a high school and not only was I able to give them a little bit of what American culture was like, but I also learned a lot about Italian culture, how the education system was, what they were learning compared to what I learned in high school...and I built these strong connections with the kids that I never thought that I would. (Ciera, from Pitzer College, USA – teaching English in a high school).

The other aspect proving the Teaching Placement is beneficial to the participating students is the opportunity to improve their skills, regardless of their studying area, or whether they wish to be a teacher or not. Eventually, some of them were

so enthusiastic about the project that they turned out to consider a future career in teaching.

Originally, I wanted to do something else as an internship [...] but there wasn't anything available, so last-minute Antonella (the project coordinator) found me a school that was so happy to have me and I fell in love with teaching in a way that I never thought I would. [...] This then inspired me to go on to teaching and then I joined the programme where I tried English and helped students with positive thinking and empowerment in Japan and then now, I am going on a programme to Malaysia in January. So, it inspired me so much to start teaching and go into education and that experience itself also helped me get into this programme and show them I had this kind of experience and that I was passionate about it. (Ciera, from Pitzer College, USA – teaching English in a high school)

5.3.2. Community

The Teaching Placement brings benefits to the community and helps strengthen the connection between the University and the local schools in Parma. In particular, this is more evident in the case of high schools, since the students now attending will be future university students. The community as a whole thus has the opportunity to see and experience one of the academic initiatives and perceive how the University is doing something concrete and useful.

In this specific case, the community is mostly represented by schools, and more in detail by classes, where school pupils are the direct beneficiaries. According to the feedback collected during these editions, school pupils have generally positively evaluated the Teaching Placement experience, making different aspects emerge. What younger students appreciated most was interacting with a student, not with another adult teacher, thus making them feel more at ease when speaking, reading, or answering questions. This more “relaxed” feeling seemed to influence their way of learning as well; the majority of students thought they had better retained the words and expressions acquired with the “Teaching Placement” student than in everyday classes.

This is true for lower school cycles as well, since kids are more likely to see a young, mother-tongue speaker more as a sort of “big friend” and less as an authoritative teacher, which may prevent them from participating for fear of being assessed. As for lower school cycles, young children are usually very responsive and enthusiastic toward what is new to them, thus learning something more about a foreign language and culture really stimulates their curiosity. Moreover, experiencing real communication with a foreign, native-speaker at an early age, even though mostly on a passive usage, is a plus when learning a language, and crucial to open a kid’s mind to new cultures.

Last but not least, the Teaching Placement seems to provide a real service for the community when we consider that having an opportunity of talking in a foreign

language with a native speaker is not always possible for everyone; some families cannot afford to travel or to pay for private lessons to improve their children's language skills. In this sense, the Teaching Placement democratically gives everybody the possibility to practise a foreign language.

5.3.3. Staff

The teaching staff in Parma schools generally benefit from this initiative by learning in turn from their "language assistant" especially with regard to specific aspects of a foreign culture and language expressions that are rarely taught when learning a second language (e.g. colloquial sayings, idioms, etc.). The opportunity of being helped by a university student, above all in secondary schools, can offer the teachers suggestions on their work from a student's perspective. Moreover, a great number of teachers have been extremely pleased to either get a language refresh or learn something new about a foreign country's life and issues.

Positive evaluations of the project have been expressed by primary schools and kindergartens as well because of the possibility of children being able to learn a language from an early age. In this case, some teachers expressed their appreciation for the project's capability to combine the foreign language with other subjects or skills.

All the while we had the opportunity to have curricular lessons of English language with different activities aimed to improve our kids' learning skills. On a few occasions we had Mathematics lessons with CLIL method, getting children approach topics that had not been presented in Italian language before²⁰ [...] In addition, the Teaching Placement is the right context to carry out a wide range of activities aimed to different learning styles, including mixed contents media and technologies (songs, videos, and pictures, presentations, games, pair/teamwork). (a teacher from a primary school in Parma hosting English and French mother tongue students)

What most teachers retained from this experience, from their side as well, was establishing connections with the students of the project. In some cases, former Teaching Placement participants and respective teacher tutors are still in contact, exchanging news about their countries and educational or cultural issues. Some teachers also helped their "assistants" once they finished their internship by providing them the necessary references or recommendation letters for their future jobs, especially if it pertained to teacher training.

²⁰ This means these children directly learned a new subject for the first time in a foreign language, overcoming the traditional passage into Italian language. This is beneficial even more if we think nowadays a great number of children attending schools are not born in Italy.

5.4. Added Value for Impact

5.4.1. What Worked Well and What Didn't in the Initiative

In general, the Teaching Placement has proved to be a successful initiative, as witnessed by the constantly high number of applicants and schools adhering to the project. Thanks to the feedback received by the students, the school pupils, and teachers, the contents and the material of the lessons have been adjusted in the different project editions, in order to keep them up to date with the most recent teaching methodologies, including the growing use of multimedia resources and devices (e.g. the "LIM" multimedia blackboard).

For the first years of project implementation, one of the difficulties was to match all the schools' requests for mother-tongue English speakers, English being the main language taught in schools of all grades. This has posed some problems because of the shortage of English native speakers, since there are typically only a small number of incoming exchange students in Parma who are native English speakers. Gradually, with a growing demand for other languages as well (above all Spanish), this gap between demand and offer was filled.

Some hindering factors that sometimes occurred concerned organisational aspects or unexpected/force majeure circumstances that made the traineeship unable to start or end well before its established conclusion. This occurred in a few cases where the exchange students had to interrupt their period of study and return to their country for familial or personal problems, and there was no possibility to find another student replacing the former one for the hosting school.

5.4.2. Facilitating Factors

The success of this initiative relies on different factors, either linked to the university policies or the community as a whole. First of all, the Teaching Placement has been largely promoted inside the university as part of the institutional internationalization strategies: in detail, the project helps fostering the internationalization of schools and a deeper integration of the incoming students within the local community. The University also takes advantage from improved relations with the schools, which are obviously among its main stakeholders.

The agreement behind this initiative, with the Local Teaching Authority and the Municipality of Parma has really helped for the dissemination and promotion of the Teaching Placement, both in quantitative and qualitative terms: on the one hand, this collaboration has led to dedicated presentation sessions in schools; on the other hand, the support of the local authorities and stakeholders, together with the University, is seen as an indicator of reliability, and thus has raised interest and positive reception from the schools. Another facilitating factor, is obviously the cost – or rather, the "no cost": the Teaching Placement project is completely free of charge for schools. This really represents an advantage, above all for those

kinds of schools where foreign language teaching is not the core discipline although the need to learn foreign languages nowadays is of great importance: for example, as regards high schools, only language high schools (*Liceo Linguistico*) provide by statute the support of a mother-tongue teachers for language classes. This does not occur for other kinds of high schools such as scientific or humanistic high schools (*Liceo Scientifico* and *Liceo Classico*) where most hours are dedicated to the study of scientific disciplines or of Latin and Ancient Greek.

As regards logistical factors, most schools adhering to the initiative are located in the city of Parma. However, a few institutes are based in the province, so reaching them could sometimes represent a problem for exchange students who do not know the territory well and do not have their own means to move. This aspect has been generally solved by providing precise indications as regards public transportation and by adapting the students' lesson timetable taking into account the distance and time for reaching the school.

Last, but not least, a special thanks goes to Dr Antonella Cortese for the enthusiasm and professionalism demonstrated in the coordination of this project, which has helped it grow and improve over the years.

5.4.3. Broader Societal Impact

Generally speaking, the Teaching Placement project can be seen as a good and efficient example of an Engaged Learning initiative, where benefits on both the students and the community are evident. The aim of growing internationalization involving not only the academic sphere, but the entire local community means trying to integrate foreign students with all the aspects and features of the territory. Students of course take advantage of a more welcoming city, offering tailored services and making them feeling more at ease. The local community benefits from a greater openness to the world, to new languages, to new cultures. The Teaching Placement also well responds to an increasing demand in learning foreign languages at high schools, even though their resources can be often limited and/or destined to other purposes: while the support of a mother tongue assistant is seen as a great opportunity by foreign language teachers, the hiring of such professionals is often not possible for every school, due to limited resources or different allocation of them based on the core discipline (e.g. a scientific high-school is more eager to use funds for science-oriented initiatives rather than hiring mother-tongue assistants for professors in English, French, German or Spanish). The Teaching Placement initiative is especially a good choice for these schools, for providing a mother tongue (or C1-certified) student in support of foreign language lessons at no extra cost.

5.4.4. COVID-19

The unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic, which broke out in Italy around late February- early March 2020, deeply affected the regular development of the

project, since it coincided with the starting of the Teaching Placement training for 2nd Semester. The roughly 20 students selected for the 2nd semester call for AY 2019-20 were thus not able to begin their traineeship in Parma local schools, due to the strict measures adopted to prevent the virus from spreading. All schools, like all public institutions, underwent the general lockdown and were forced to work remotely, with great effort. Differently from HEIs, schools are not generally used to distance or blended learning, so it took days to adapt traditional ways of teaching and experiencing the class to the new modality. This difficulty of management forced schools to concentrate on keeping up to date with the ministerial programmes, thus leaving not enough space for other initiatives or projects, including the Teaching Placement.

After a general reduction of COVID-19 contagion during the summer, schools have reopened in September according to the protocol set by the Italian government, the Ministry of Education and Health. Despite this return “in presence”, the risk still exists and the complex procedure to be applied in case of contagion have hindered the setting up of a new call for the Teaching Placement for AY 2020-21.

The current situation is worsening: COVID-19 cases have begun to rise again from September 2020 and have grown exponentially since then, forcing Italy to adopt other closures and encourage distance learning, at least for high schools. If this scenario continues into January 2021 as well, a possible call for Teaching Placement may be possible, but only through distance learning. This could be acceptable for pupils, who may be interested in any case in having different lessons, but it will extremely reduce the key objective of the project in enabling the participants to fully experience school life and Italian culture, even more in case of a restriction of trips to Italy from abroad.

5.4. Conclusions

Teaching Placement: Teaching without Borders represents an example of a consolidated Engaged Learning initiative, active since AY 2008-09. Thanks to the agreement with the University with the Municipality, the Local Teaching Authority and the local schools in Parma, this initiative has brought mutual benefits for students and the community. The general positive feedback and the high number of applicants for every edition prove that the Teaching Placement has worked very well over the years. Despite the good performances, there is still the potential to improve and update, especially as regards the innovative teaching methodology: future challenges in fact, and ever more after the COVID-19 pandemic, need a growing use of distance learning or in blended modality. Perhaps, this will be a new aspect to be investigated when setting up a future call even though the main purpose of living and immersing into Italian school and culture will need to be rearranged.

6. Master's Degree in Equality and Gender

University of Malaga, Spain

Carmen Cortés Zaborras, Mary Griffith

6.1. Introduction

In Spain, examples of Engaged Learning appear in the literature from 2003-2004 and Battle (2015) makes note that educational centres and social entities have a long-standing tradition in Spain and have spread to Latin America. Of course, there are examples within the University and vocational training at all levels, and increasingly there has been a growing interest in Science Shops. Typically, the incentives include university credits, and many are curriculum-based.

In Spain, the term 'Engaged Learning' refers to active learning or participatory learning, while 'Service-Learning' seems to be closely tied to volunteering. In higher education, many universities have a range of policies that could be loosely organised into living knowledge networks and the so-called 'third mission.' One report suggests that two thirds of all Spanish universities have civic engagement or Service-Learning as part of their strategic plans (Millican et al., 2019, p. 43). Nevertheless, a national policy is not in place and universities seem to be one of the local drivers of Engaged Learning.

Many grassroots initiatives are effectively uniting higher educational institutions, municipalities, and communities to address real world problems. In this case study, we will focus on a master's degree in Gender and Equality offered at the University of Malaga after a brief contextualisation.

Educators think of engagement in four related but different ways (Bowen, 2005).

1. The most fundamental is student engagement with the learning process: just getting students actively involved.
2. The second is student engagement with the object of study. Here the emphasis is on the stimulation of students' learning by direct experience of something new.
3. Another is student engagement with contexts of the subject of study. This gives emphasis to the importance of context as it may affect and be affected by the students' primary subject. When social and civic contexts are considered, this inevitably raises ethical issues.
4. Finally, there is student engagement with the human condition, especially in its social, cultural, and civic dimensions.

6.2. Overview of the Chosen Initiative

Within Bowen's (2005) generic framework, the University of Malaga (UMA) contributes to the CaST project in three differentiated but overlapping directions.

Each initiative approaches engagement from different positions, both in terms of pedagogic aims and also previous experience of working with stakeholders. All three directions include a research purpose and collaborate with innovative education projects (in Spanish PIEs). In this context, there is, therefore, no right or wrong answer and no 'one size fits all' solution.

The first direction leans towards curricular change in order to provide students with greater employability and the skills they will need once they leave the University. This shared goal takes place both at the graduate as well as the postgraduate level.

A second direction includes an ongoing professional development project for improved communication both in and outside the classroom directed toward developing better communication skills. Here the emphasis is on the stimulation of participants' learning by direct experience of something new closely tied to professional development or key skills.

The third direction is a combined project that takes place at the postgraduate level with a fascinating outreach program that will be the focus of this case study about gender issues in the immigrant population here in our community. Here the main issue is student engagement with contexts of the subject of study and its connection with the community. Communication strategies and employability come together in support of the immigrant population. Many grassroots initiatives are effectively uniting higher educational institutions, municipalities, and communities to address real world problems.

In this case study we will highlight the master's degree in Gender and Equality offered at the University of Malaga. This master's program began in 2010 and since then has led many outreach programs with the community. One of the most salient research projects and internships includes research on women immigrants set in the frame of gender equality.

6.2.1. Structure of the Initiative

The Máster en Igualdad y Género²¹ (Master's Degree in Equality and Gender) consistently fills the 40 places offered every year; however, many prospective applicants are still unable to take part because the demand is higher than the availability. It consists of a common module made up of five subjects: Gender and feminisms; Public equality policies and women's rights; Gender and social and community intervention; The communication society from a gender perspective; and Equality as a strategic axis in economics. The program offers five different itineraries: Education, Labour, Health, Humanities, and Legal. Each one consists of two theoretical subjects and a practical one.

The Master's Degree in Equality and Gender, which spans three semesters (90 ECTS), is a multidisciplinary qualification at the University of Malaga taught by

²¹ <https://www.uma.es/master-en-igualdad-y-genero/>

41 professors. As could be expected, professors come from extremely diverse backgrounds. These include:

Education and Social Sciences: History of Education, Didactics of Language and Literature, Developmental and Educational Psychology, Social Psychology, Communication and Advertising, Journalism.

Labour and Health: Labour and Social Security Law, Applied economics, Social Work and Social Services, History of Science (Medicine), Nursing.

Humanities and Social Science: Moral Philosophy, Philosophy of Law, English, French and Spanish Philology, Contemporary History, History of Art.

Law: Criminal Law, Administrative Law, State Ecclesiastical Law, Public International Law and International Relations, Civil Law, Public Law.

Research: Methodology of behavioural sciences, Library Science and Documentation.

The internship subjects consist of 6 ECTS; and it is through this practical application where we discover Engaged Learning. The theoretical subjects of the other itineraries can be taken as electives. In the third semester, the research module consists of two subjects: Gender research methodology and the final Trabajo de Fin de Máster (MA Dissertation).

The transversal competences in the master's degree are:

- Working in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams, in diverse and complex social and cultural environments.
- Recognising diversity and multiculturalism.
- Learning and communicating in diverse cultural environments.
- Developing critical thinking skills and reflective practice.
- Developing skills for both analysis and synthesis.
- Gaining awareness of the discipline and the political, economic, social, and cultural contexts in which professional activity will take place.
- Generating new ideas (imagination, creativity, originality).
- Learning to adapt to new situations and environments.
- Being ethically and socially committed.
- Acquiring knowledge of other languages.
- Carrying out research work.
- Creating a detailed analysis of the main personal and social resources of the group under study.
- Identifying and analysing the different factors that influence gender-based violence.

- Developing skills to promote social changes aimed at improving the quality of women's lives.
- Gaining greater respect for human rights, democratic principles, the principles of equality between women and men, equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and the promotion of a culture of peace and democratic values.

As mentioned, there are five different itineraries and each of the five curricular internships has a direct relationship with Engaged Learning. The internships are Education-Practicum A, Labour-Practicum B, Health-Practicum C, Humanities-Practicum D, and Legal-Practicum E. In this case study, we will focus on the Humanities itinerary, that consists of two theoretical subjects: Diversity, society, culture from a gender perspective, and Feminist literature and art, as well as a practical internship.

The implementation of the internship, or more specifically Practicum D, aims to achieve the specific competencies listed below:

- Identifying women's psycho-social needs at individual, group, and community levels.
- Assessing the needs of groups at risk.
- Encouraging the development of networks that address the needs or problems of groups of women at risk.
- Mastering strategies and techniques that allow the recipients of intervention to become actively involved.
- Planning social and community intervention programs.
- Applying different techniques which favour group participation and the adequate functioning of the group.

To complete their internships, students collaborate with many community stakeholders participating in the initiative. Students enrolled in the Humanities itinerary can do their internships choosing from different women's associations: Provincial Federation of Women's Associations "Agora", Association of Historical Studies on Women (AEHM)²² Seminar on Women's Interdisciplinary Studies (SEIM)²³; NGOs: Moroccan Association for the Integration of Immigrants, Málaga Acoge²⁴ (Malaga Welcomes), Cooperation and Development with North Africa, Women in Solidarity, and a cultural foundation: Alonso Quijano Foundation²⁵.

²² <http://www.aehm.uma.es/>

²³ <https://www.uma.es/seminario-de-estudios-intedisciplinarios-de-la-mujer/>

²⁴ <https://www.uma.es/seminario-de-estudios-intedisciplinarios-de-la-mujer/>

²⁵ Federación Provincial de Asociaciones de Mujeres "Agora" (Provincial Federation of Women's Associations "Agora"), Asociación de Estudios Históricos sobre la Mujer (AEHM) (Association of Historical Studies on Women), Seminario de Estudios Interdisciplinarios de la Mujer (SEIM) (Seminar on Women's Interdisciplinary Studies); NGOs: Asociación Marroquí para la Integración

Provided they conform to the established skill set for the course, other institutions may provide curricular internships with a signed agreement with the University of Malaga. In the past collaborating organisations have included: ONU Mujeres Honduras²⁶ (UN Women Honduras); Asociación de mujeres supervivientes de la violencia de género (AMUSUVIG)²⁷ (Association of Women Survivors of Gender-based Violence); Ministerio Público, Primera Fiscalía de Prevención del Delito de Trujillo, Región de La Libertad (Public Ministry, First District Attorney for the Prevention of Crimes in Trujillo, Región de la Libertad, Perú)²⁸.

Each student can choose one of the five itineraries and in this case study we have focused on Humanities. The choice of itineraries depends largely on the previous training of the students. Most of them have a degree in Education or in Social Work, so Practicum A and Practicum B are the subjects that most students take. This explains why the Humanities, Legal, and Health Practicums usually have fewer students. In any case, students of Social Work, Law, Education, Communication, and Theatre Arts, among others, have enrolled in Practicum D. Table 6.1 shows the students enrolled in this internship course (Practicum D) over a ten-year period. This is a sustainable and focused initiative that readily adapts to continual developments in the greater community.

Figure 16 Students enrolled in the Practicum D course (2010/2011 - 2020/2021)

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	1	5	3	3	5	3	2	7	4	5

At the close of their internship for evaluation, students have to create a final report in which they have to collect the data referred to below. In addition, they may include as many annexes as they deem appropriate or add subsections within this main framework:

1. Introduction (justification of the choice of NGO or entity, history of the institution...).
2. Presentation of the NGO (legal characteristics, objectives, activities, target audience, other relevant information...).
3. Activities carried out (presentation and explanation of the specific activities during the internship period, number of hours devoted to each of them, other relevant data...).

de Inmigrantes (Moroccan Association for the Integration of Immigrants), Málaga Acoge (Malaga Welcomes), Cooperación y Desarrollo con el Norte de África (CODENAF) (Cooperation and Development with North Africa), Mujeres Solidarias (Women in Solidarity); and a cultural foundation: Fundación Alonso Quijano (Alonso Quijano Foundation).

²⁶ <https://lac.unwomen.org/es/donde-estamos/honduras>

²⁷ <https://www.amusuvig.com/>

²⁸ <https://www.deperu.com/judicial/fiscalias/01-fiscalia-provincial-de-prevencion-del-delito-de-trujillo-4223>

4. Proposals for specific activities that the institution/NGO could implement for improvement in the general functioning of the entity or in the performance of the internship.
5. Conclusions: learning, assessment, etc.
6. Bibliography consulted.

There is a clear research focus in these reports of no more than 15 pages. The community stakeholders also report on the student's performance using a rubric that contains 19 items that are valued by the tutor of the institution from 0 to 5. These refer to the following competences, skills, and behaviours: attitude of the student in the institution (9 items), teamwork (6 items), and applying equality knowledge (4 items). As the internship in these organisations has been carried out following the confinement due to the pandemic, a new item has been included in this year's rubric: The student has complied and helped to comply with the current health standards.

The academic advisor uses this report together with the students' internship report to assess student performance. From AY 2018-19 the evaluation by the tutor is also completed with a personal interview (online on this academic year) and a rubric that contains items concerning monitoring activities, the final report, and the skills acquired during the internship (appreciated during the interview).

Postgraduate students are highly encouraged to bring their investigation into the greater community to provide real data for pressing issues today in collaboration with several national and international NGOs, and public institutions, like City Hall, Health Counselling, Equality Counselling, Provincial Council, provincial prison, etc. In this way, the case presented gives students an open-ended, research-driven question while challenging them to present their results through their dissertation.

6.2.2. How the Community is Matched with the Initiative

The community impact targets immigrant women who, in particular, may suffer serious consequences after their move to Spain. They have to manage life in an unfamiliar space to which they have difficult access, not only because of the language, but because of the culture as well. They lose their support networks and have to find a balance between the impositions of their culture, which leads them largely to isolation, and the perspectives within the new one. They can suffer multiple discriminations: by gender, by ethnic group, and by religion. They may also be victims of trafficking, or of sexual or commercial exploitation, and so may their children. In most cases, they are in a complicated legal and economic situation and benefit from partnerships between the University and community stakeholders.

Figure 17 Workshop, Master in Equality and Gender, Malaga, Spain

In order to focus the discussion regarding community stakeholders, we are going to look at the Moroccan Association for the Integration of Migrants (declared of municipal public utility) and Cooperation and Development with North Africa (CODENAF). The matching process begins with students' CVs. The community stakeholders first study the CVs of the students who wish to do the internship with them, interview the candidates, and choose those who fit their needs and the specific projects they are developing at that time. In 10 years, 22 students have done their internship in just these two organisations.

In 1996 CODENAF was founded and started working on International Cooperation projects and currently it employs 15 people (Directorio de ONGD, p. 37). The Moroccan Association for the Integration of Migrants employs 13 people and has 57 members, with a total of 2779 users in 2016. It was founded in 2003 and they began working on International cooperation projects in 2008 (Directorio de ONGD, p. 31).

Both NGOs help men and women to integrate in society. To this end, they offer training programmes, including Spanish classes, English courses, Arabic classes, basic computer classes, school support classes for children, and social skills workshops. Practicum D students have participated in these tasks by giving Spanish, English classes (philology graduates), and school support classes (graduates in Education).

Students collaborate with the training team of CODENAF Malaga with activities that foster integration. These workshops not only seek to favour the interpersonal communication of immigrants, but also work on training aspects regarding resources, social services, and cultural characteristics of the host country. These training aspects are particularly valuable when requesting the Integration Effort Report and CODENAF is an accredited entity for this purpose. The training courses are part of the Comprehensive Service for Immigrants, set up by the headquarters of CODENAF in Malaga thanks to the support of the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs through the General Directorate for the Coordination of Migration Policies²⁹.

²⁹ www.codenaf.org

Social Work graduates have also given workshops focused on the differences in customs and behaviour of the two cultures. They, along with law students, have worked actively in the field of socio-legal intervention, dealing with information and guidance, intervention in situations of social exclusion, and providing crucial legal and labour advice.

In this respect, there are more ongoing projects at CODENAF in which the students have been involved:

1. Comprehensive Care Service (SAI), with the aim of providing support and assistance to the immigrant population in any type of consultation, and if appropriate, to refer them to Social Services. Its purpose is to identify basic needs and provide them with information. The SAI is a space for reception and attention, information, advice on institutions, registration, social services, health, housing, etc.
2. Labour Orientation Service for Immigrant Population (SOLPI): Carried out to promote the social and labour insertion of unemployed immigrants who need support and assistance. It consists of individual interviews used to make a social diagnosis.

6.2.3. How the Initiative is Resourced

There are several sources of funding. The most stable source is tuition fees. As it is an official qualification, the course is financed by the Andalusian Regional Government. Students pay tuition for credits: 13,68 euros per ECTS credit (2019-2020).

The Moroccan Association for the Integration of Migrants created the area of women and gender in 2009 with the aim of making the gender perspective a transversal axis to be considered in all its activities. This department, composed of experts in gender equality, is the focal point of the students' active participation. During the first two academic years after the implementation of the master's degree (2010-2011/2011-2012), the Moroccan Association for the Integration of Migrants managed several reception flats for immigrant women suffering from domestic violence. The students attended to their needs alongside a responsible social worker, an activity that involved a great deal of commitment and also responsible learning of great value to students. Subsequently, the lack of subsidies prevented the continuation of this housing programme.

In fact, it is through mediating organisations that the community impact is best achieved. Most foundations submit projects to public institutions in various local, provincial, regional, national, or international competitive calls and may receive funding to carry them out. They are associations or foundations that receive outside funding and part of these resources is channelled through the master's partnership. The funding from the NGOs benefits the university students and the NGOs benefit from the service learning provided. There is clear reciprocity.

6.2.4. Outputs of the Initiative

Students actively participate in workshops, often taking a leading role and showing great initiative. These same students, through a research-based approach, collect data. In turn, this data driven format provides the NGOs with specific proposals for improvement. Finally, the dissertations drawn up from the data collected during or after the work placement offer insight into the professional development and real-world application of the internship. Clearly, the main impact is seen in the reciprocal benefits to all partners and this is best seen in the focus of the workshops and activities organised. Their main purpose is to strengthen the immigrant women's social and work skills to help them in their process of labour insertion. Women work on vital concepts such as self-esteem, personal and professional development, and healthy lifestyle habits. At the same time, these workshops have served to facilitate their access to computer literacy skills, currently necessary in any job search³⁰. The idea of social coexistence is also stimulated thanks to one of the workshops among young people from the city's high schools, so that they understand the need to promote equality in all areas.

Figure 18 Raising awareness about Gender Violence in Schools. Master in Equality, Malaga, Spain



³⁰ www.codenaf.org

A selection of the topics covered in these activities in which students have participated include the following:

- Social and labour inclusion for wards of the state.
- The Integration Effort Course for immigrants covers both Spanish culture as well as gender and equality contents.
- Vocational training for women and Spanish classes at a basic level. Students are asked to prepare the class and the teaching materials.
- Advice, information on social care in the different public institutions, including those that offer direct care to women victims of gender violence in Malaga, as well as on public aid for different reasons, such as large families, care of the elderly or children, unemployment, etc.

Salient are the proposals for improvements found in the students' reports that the academic tutor transmits to the institutions. On some occasions, specific recommendations with regard to immigrant women provided by students have been taken into consideration by NGOs in the development of their subsequent activities, as the tutor of the NGO CODENAF declared in his interview. We present some of the recommendations contained in the students' reports between 2015 and 2018:

To conduct more workshops and courses on gender so that immigrant women who attend learn tools on empowerment, self-esteem, self-confidence, how to defend themselves.

To make women aware of all the resources and services available to them in any case of gender-based violence.

To carry out courses on topics such as roles and tasks, gender stereotypes, the space occupied by men and women, decision-making and power, etc.

On some occasions, students have based their MA Dissertation on their experiences within these institutions. In these cases, they have continued their work there for some time after the internship, either as volunteers or hired by the NGO. For example, one student continued to work for six months after the end of the course in order to gather information on women's support networks, both in the country of origin and after their arrival in Spain. The findings of this MA Dissertation, which have also been passed on to the NGO, have facilitated the development of activities that promote links between women of different origins, including Spanish women in Malaga.

Figure 19 Professional development for immigrant women, Workshop CODENAF, Malaga, Spain



6.2.5. How the Initiative is Evaluated

Multi directional assessment includes how the academic programme itself is evaluated, how students assess the programme, how community stakeholders are evaluated, as well as a follow up interview with one of the NGOs.

6.2.5.1. Academic Programme

The Andalusian Knowledge Agency (AAC), through its Evaluation and Accreditation Directorate (DEVA), is responsible for the evaluation and accreditation of the quality of Andalusian universities and their teaching staff regionally. All degrees are evaluated every four years by this agency, which determines whether to continue teaching the degree or to suspend it. The evaluation is made after hearing representatives of all the actors involved (students, teaching staff, coordinators, dean of the Faculty of Humanities, employers, graduates). Although the evaluation is generally positive, the DEVA representatives, who are university professors, can give indications for improvement, which the general coordination of the master's follows in order to achieve the requirements.

6.2.5.2. Student Evaluation

The standard surveys to find out students' satisfaction with the teaching work in the subjects of the different degrees carried out by the Andalusian Regional Government do not apply in the case of curricular internships. Instead, the

Master's in Equality and Gender Equality has proposed last year (2019-2020) that students evaluate their internships through surveys.

6.2.5.3. Community Stakeholders

The NGOs are evaluated through the student survey and the academic tutor's report, which can also be used for internal evaluation. They are also evaluated by the institutions that finance the social projects after their completion (ministries, regional, and local authorities).

Figure 20 NGO working with immigrant women, Master in Equality and Gender, Malaga, Spain



6.3. Engagement with Participants

In addition to the previous assessments, more qualitative data has been collected from both students and the NGOs. Data includes three types of surveys: first, students' final reports, as well as follow-up surveys. In addition, we have collected data from one of the participating NGOs.

6.3.1. Students

Students' general assessments of the work in these organisations have all been very positive, as can be seen in these examples:

The results of the development of the practice have been very positive. I have learned an infinite number of new things and have broken with many of the

fears and insecurities I have in relation to the work environment. I am grateful that I was allowed to include a workshop on equality and gender in the Integration Effort Course.

Doing an internship at CODENAF has allowed me to get used to dealing with the public, with the added bonus of being a multicultural public, with a different language, culture, customs, and way of socializing. On the other hand, I have been able to see the reality of the different migrant groups up close and contrast it with the theoretical knowledge I have acquired throughout my studies.

I have learned to cope with the difficulties I have encountered and to respond to various requests autonomously. I have felt very valued by the tutor and by the rest of my colleagues in the association, as well as by the public I have been able to attend to, which makes me very pleased.

As for the acquisition of knowledge, I have been able to learn especially how an association works, what the hierarchies are like and how communication, resource management, time, contracting, project management, etc., are carried out. I have also assimilated many basic notions of bureaucracy and how the system of government aid works, as well as its geography in the city of Malaga, that is, which are the buildings in which the different governing bodies are located. I have been able to interact with migrants and learn first-hand about the difficulties that their situations entail, which has greatly amplified the previous knowledge I had about the issue of migration. For example, I have obtained a lot of information about the legal procedures to be completed for the regularisation of a migrant's situation: how to obtain a residence card, how and how often it has to be renewed, depending on the case, what requirements are needed in this respect, how to obtain nationality, etc.

Finally, I would like to point out that although there is no gender focus as such in the association and the projects carried out there, I have come to know the reality of many migrant women and have become more interested in the gender issue linked to migration: the double stigma attached to being a migrant woman; their relationship to care; the difficulties in accessing the world of work and the obstacle that motherhood can pose in this regard, in a situation where migration, gender and poverty are intertwined; gender violence among migrant women and the problem of violence and exploitation of women in an irregular situation.

The evaluation of my time at CODENAF Malaga has been very satisfactory. I have been able to learn about issues related to immigrant women and gender, but in the same way I have been able to enrich myself in other matters, such as legislative issues regarding residence cards, intercultural mediation, the design of workshops, courses and projects. I

have also been able to learn in the personal face to face treatment with users and to carry out workshops without supervision.

The most significant thing for me has been the Spanish classes, in which I have had to teach about 25 people of different ages and nationalities, which involved preparing different types of materials and topics adapted to each student in the class. All of this has meant that I have been able to learn different methodologies and get to know the people who come to the association, thus favouring a closer treatment.

I also enjoyed giving some workshops to the local high schools, as this is an activity that I had not done before either. The workshop that I liked best was on equality and gender, which I planned and gave, in which I explained the differences between sex, gender, sexual identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, all in a participative and dynamic way.

Finally, I would like to mention that in general the internship in the Moroccan association has been a very constructive experience and one that I would repeat, as I have been able to learn a lot from them. I have also learned a lot from the group that comes to the association.

The second section consists of a sampling of responses from student surveys.

Student 1:

Why did you choose this training centre?

Moved by a personal desire born from the study, during the degree in Anthropology, of the subjects "Migrations, interculturality and difference management" and "Ethnology of the Arab World", as well as the French language, co-official language of some of the North African countries, I decided to show my interest in this association in an attempt to make a practical approach to the mentioned theoretical fields.

What have the internships brought you?

From a human point of view, I have certainly met people very different to me culturally who have welcomed me and shared with me some aspects of their culture, such as the vision of religion, family, body, being a woman or a mother in Islam, Ramadan, etc. I believe that this exchange helps me to confront a cultural "Other" and to rethink my own culture and the prejudices and stereotypes that we have.

Day by day, I have had the satisfaction of having learned something new, even if it is small, and above all of seeing how little by little I could help the people who come there more effectively and in very different areas. I have learned to face the difficulties that I have encountered and to respond to

different requirements autonomously, largely thanks to the freedom and responsibility that my coordinators have given me.

Student 2:

Why did you study this master's degree?

I chose this master's degree because I believe that it is very important to reintegrate into society people who have been excluded, whether because of their race, ideology, religion, sex..., above all because I am very aware of violence, mistreatment and abuse of women and immigrants....

What is the most important thing for you about the internship?

The autonomy that I have been given and the trust that the people in the organisation have placed in me, by giving me individual responsibility to be able to do projects independently.

Has participation in the placement had any impact (direct or indirect) on your approach to studying?

It has had a huge impact, as I have been equipped with various tools and resources in my personal and academic life, such as autonomy, empathy, teamwork, etc.

6.3.2. Community

In this final section we present an NGO survey regarding internship to assess the impact in the community and the relationship with CODENAF Malaga³¹.

How many trainees do you receive on average each year?

We usually welcome around 10 students from the different master's degrees of the University of Malaga per year, and 1 or 2 students from the Master's Degree in Equality and Gender.

³¹ The survey was collected by Carmen Cortés using email because of the ongoing pandemic. The response to the survey by the CODENAF delegate in Malaga arrived on 16/10/2020. The rest of the surveys sent to the people involved received no response.

Do you have a person in charge of tutoring the internship or are students integrated into the organisation?

At each of the sites, we have a person in charge of tutoring the internship who in this case is Adel Baba El Muktari.

What criteria do you use to select candidates for the Master's in equality and gender?

In addition to their CVs, in the interviews, we value their interest, desire and motivation for the associative work in the field of migration.

What do the interns of the Master's Degree in Gender and Equality contribute to the association?

From the organisational point of view:

To provide us with the tools and updated knowledge on equality and gender. An example would be the news on inclusive language.

From the point of view of immigrant integration:

Collaborate with the professionals of CODENAF in the development and delivery of workshops on gender equality to the immigrant population, as well as, in the personalized attention especially to women victims of gender violence.

From the human point of view:

The good treatment and empathy shown to women from other countries, religions, cultures, etc.

Are there any special features compared to other degrees?

Empathy and tailor-made treatment, especially for immigrant women.

What kind of tasks do you entrust to them? Are there any particular tasks that you prefer them to do (with regard to students from other masters)?

We especially entrust them with the review and updating of projects from the point of view of equality and gender, the preparation and delivery of workshops on gender equality for both immigrant men and women, and the personalised and individualised treatment of immigrant women who are victims of gender violence.

Have any of them contributed ideas that have ultimately influenced the development of any of your activities?

Yes, the development of the equality and gender module within the cycle of workshops leading to the obtaining of the Integration Effort Report, as well as games to work with children within the Palma Palmilla Week of Cultures.

6.4. Added Value for Impact

Impact can be measured both in and outside the university. The local community is also impacted by the initiative. After the completion of the first phase in 2018 in Malaga, the project "Immigrant Women Challenges. Phase II" is in action. This programme, training, and awareness-raising workshops are held for high school students and teachers, with the aim of promoting debates among students, giving them a different perspective on immigrant women, and encouraging a critical and committed attitude to the reality of these women. In Malaga, this initiative continues to support its general objective: "to promote a critical and committed attitude among the population of Malaga regarding the reality of immigrant women in order to advance towards global citizenship, world justice, equality and the achievement of human rights"³². At the municipal level there is growing awareness of the social support structures in place for immigrants.

In addition to the Master's on Gender and Equality, worthy of note is our collaboration with the Innovative Educational Projects, PIE17-128: 'Feminism in the University Classrooms. Multidisciplinary Didactic Proposals and Gender Studies', and PIE 19-162: 'Feminisms and Queer Theory. Interdisciplinary Studies on Genders and Identities in the university classrooms (2019-2021)'. These innovative educational projects provide limited funding but do encourage continued improvements to the initiative and research purposes. Oftentimes these projects plant the seed for future initiatives as well as expanding upon existing collaborations.

6.4.1. COVID-19

During the confinement, the University of Málaga offered its internship students to take virtual training courses in employability since they could not access the internship centres in person. Some students took these courses, but some of them preferred to do the internships after the confinement, also in case they had completed the proposed courses.

³² www.codenaf.org

Figure 21 Raising awareness about inclusion in local schools, Master in Equality and Gender, Malaga, Spain



6.5. Conclusions

Social responsibility involves both the University and the Community. Engaged Learning discusses student engagement with the human condition, especially in its social, cultural, and civic dimensions. Through this master's degree in Gender and Equality we address societal grand challenges and tackle these challenges by raising awareness about equality, by inserting key communication skills, and by fostering community outreach.

Partnerships, based on personal relationships (c.f. Sany & Holland, 2006, p. 38; Benson & Harkavy, 2000, p. 73; Worrall, 2007, p. 5), are a central element of Engaged Learning. Without partnerships from universities and communities, Engaged Learning cannot exist. In the cases of both the Moroccan Association for the Integration of Migrants as well as CODENAF, the migrant communities clearly benefit from achieving greater integration of people from North Africa. At the same time there is added value to the receiving community as a direct partner in the relationship.

The outputs include both direct impact for all stakeholders as well as a research focus. The outcome of the internships has been detailed previously. Both students and immigrants benefit as they come into contact. Numerous workshops allow interns direct contact with realities that oftentimes are taken for granted, such as: Access to education, health and legal services, employment, or even something as basic as housing and language.

There are mutual benefits for both students and immigrants. Students become aware of other social and cultural realities, thus applying some of the theoretical issues and technical aspects in which they have been trained during the first two teaching semesters of the master's degree. It also allows them to change their point of view regarding this group of people, to learn personal values such as greater empathy and the desire to learn from other cultures, to break down racial stereotypes, and to understand and overcome discrimination against this group. Since in the NGOs everyone participates and collaborates together, everyone needs everyone. In this way, they learn the enormous value of teamwork and intercommunication within the working group. Students point out that one of the main contributions of the internship is the acquisition of autonomy and self-confidence, as they must take responsibility as individuals in order to be able to implement projects from their point of view and in an autonomous manner. In addition, they are introduced to the working world and real-world issues. The degree very often changes the mindset of these students, widening their perspectives on gender and equality and opening doors to professional opportunities. On some occasions the students have continued to collaborate with NGOs as contract staff, they have been hired as educators, social workers, or expert anthropologists. At the University of Málaga we continue to search for real world problems so that university students can begin to contribute to the problem solving necessary for engaged learning to take hold in our communities.

8. Grand Challenges

University of Exeter, United Kingdom
Lindsey Anderson, Anka Djordjevic, Tom Ritchie

8.1. Introduction

In the UK, Engaged Learning still mainly occurs in an ad-hoc manner, although it is much more embedded in some Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) than others. A variety of top-down drivers have fostered and supported opportunities to embed community engagement into research, teaching, and learning strategies. These include the 'civic university agenda', the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), and the availability of funding streams such as the Higher Education Innovation Fund. UK HEIs are also increasingly becoming more socially responsible and are keen to explore innovative research-inspired learning and teaching pedagogies.

While there is currently no formal programme of Engaged Learning at the University of Exeter, research-inspired learning and teaching are central to the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. There are also increasing opportunities for students to participate in Engaged Learning on societally impactful projects through the curriculum on their undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Students can also access a suite of schemes through the Career Zone³³, which enables them to engage with sector-specific training programmes and internships designed to provide them with the practical experience of working with external partners. The Green Consultants and the Professional Pathways programme are examples of these initiatives, which enable students to partner with third sector or community organisations. Grand Challenges is an annual event that provides students with the opportunity to work within interdisciplinary groups to apply their skills and knowledge to a real-life problem.

8.2. Overview of the Chosen Initiative

The following case study has been written using materials taken from the Grand Challenges website, personal communication with the Grand Challenges Team, and informal conversations with:

- Three students who have taken part in this year's Challenges Online event and have also participated in Grand Challenges in previous years;
- Three Grand Challenges student representatives;

³³ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/careers/>

- Anka Djordjevic, Grand Challenges Programme Manager;
- Simon Pardoe, Grand Challenges Programme Officer;
- Challenge Leads from the Challenges Online: Dr Fred Cooper, Dr Laszlo Hovarth, and Dr Natalia Lawrence;
- Filipa Torres, Co-founder of Recognise RED;
- Lee Snook, Liaison Librarian, University of Exeter Library;
- Marcus Brown, FabLab Exeter Digital Making Tutor

8.2.1. Structure of the Initiative

8.2.1.1. Overview

Grand Challenges is an initiative that runs at the University of Exeter for a week in June each year, following the examination period. The programme has been running since 2013 and attracts over 500 students from across the University of Exeter's campuses in Devon and Cornwall. Grand Challenges provides students with the opportunity to work on a topic outside of their degree programme, creating innovative solutions to some of the most challenging sustainability-related global problems. Working in interdisciplinary teams, students receive training, mentorship, and support from external partners and academic experts, empowering them to share their views and learn new skills, which they then apply to solve real-world issues. Students get to pick from one of several contemporary global challenges that are specially chosen to ensure they do not require previous topic knowledge.

The week-long format of the event highlights to students how they can make a difference, tackling global issues in a unique way, and enabling them to have a real impact on the world around them. Many students continue their projects and use them to create subsequent research projects, as well as business and job opportunities.

Grand Challenges usually takes place on the Streatham Campus³⁴ in Exeter, and on the Penryn Campus³⁵ in Falmouth, Cornwall. In 2020, an online version of the programme – Challenges Online – replaced the usual face-to-face Grand Challenges week in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

8.2.1.2. Grand Challenges Week

At the beginning of the Grand Challenges week, students hear from a range of academic speakers, external experts and guest speakers with lived experience. The guests share their perspectives on some of the main challenges facing the world today and inspire the students to find solutions. The students then spend the week on campus in their interdisciplinary Challenge Teams, developing ideas that

³⁴ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/visit/campuses/streatham/>

³⁵ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/visit/campuses/penryn/>

address specific aspects of their Challenge. The themes vary each year, with Climate Change, Food for Thought, Mental Health and Global Security featuring regularly. In 2019, Gender Inequality and Ocean Plastic were also introduced to the programme.

The students are supported by postgraduate facilitators to identify the strengths and specific skillsets within their group, before agreeing on the aspect of their Challenge on which they wish to focus. Students can focus on the issues and questions that they are most passionate about and create a project that aims to make a difference. They agree on the type of output they hope to create at the end of the week (such as an app, poster, board-game, or book), while also planning and organising their own time, research, and activities (see 'Outputs' below for more information).

On the final morning of the Grand Challenges week, teams present their work to sector experts and other students working on the same Challenge. They then showcase their work as part of an exhibition at the University (or online), which is open to students from all Challenges, as well as University staff and students, and members of the general public.

8.2.1.3. Training and Support

In advance of Grand Challenges Week, students are offered an optional series of masterclasses, demonstrations, skills sessions, and workshops from world-leading academics and experts in their fields, to help prepare them for tackling the challenges. These sessions are run online and face-to-face in the weeks leading up to and including the Grand Challenges week. These sessions include: effective presentation skills; collaborative working online; Ideation: defining the problem you want to solve; digital marketing; and problem solving. Additional two-hour workshops are run the week before Grand Challenges on topics such as the sustainable development goals; practical presentation skills; understanding team dynamics; persuading, influencing, and negotiating skills; and assertiveness and understanding behaviour. The full list of training and support is available on the Grand Challenges website³⁶.

8.2.1.4. Ethics

Grand Challenges provides one of the few opportunities for Exeter undergraduate students to undertake research and learn about ethical protocols. Students wishing to undertake a piece of primary research - such as an online survey or interview - are encouraged to ensure that their research proposal is within the ethical parameters set out for Grand Challenges. Their facilitator or academic support then approves their idea before they carry it out.

³⁶ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/grandchallenges/moreinfo/grandchallengesskillstraining/>

8.2.1.5. External Partners

A critical factor in the success of Grand Challenges is the range of partners that work with the students, sharing their knowledge, experience, and skills. During the week, the Challenge Teams are encouraged to engage with external partners and undertake the necessary research to help them develop their ideas and output(s). For example, some students tackling the Ocean Plastic challenge in 2018 organised a field trip to Exeter Marine Recycling Facility, where they helped to clean up plastic and other litter on Westward Ho! Beach. Another group of students who chose the Climate Change challenge worked with children from a local primary school to conduct market research which helped them shape their ideas for an educational climate change app. The children later came to the campus to listen to the students pitching their ideas and voted for their favourite app.

Since 2017, Grand Challenges has worked with FabLab, a community resource found in the heart of Exeter City Library³⁷. FabLab plays a prominent role within the Grand Challenges by equipping students with the tools to produce more creative outputs. Tools such as 3D printers, laser cutters, and digital embroiders have enabled students to create outputs such as games, jigsaws, keyrings, and even a 'Brexit' cow.

Other partners vary depending on the Challenge Themes, with academic leads inviting collaborators or other relevant experts or organisations to participate in the initiative. Since 2014, the external partners for the Climate Change theme have included the UK's national weather service, the Met Office³⁸, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change³⁹, Exeter City Futures⁴⁰, as well as individuals such as Ed King from Climate Home News⁴¹, and Seth Honnor, Artistic Director of Kaleider⁴². While in the Food for Thought theme, external experts have included Exeter Food Network⁴³, St Sidwell's Community Centre⁴⁴, and Eden Project⁴⁵.

As well as collaborating with as many local and national partners, since 2017 Grand Challenges has worked with the University of South Florida in helping them to set up their Operation: Global Action programme⁴⁶. The University of South Florida observed Grand Challenges for a couple of years before collaborating to set up their own programme. In 2019, a small number of students

³⁷ <https://fablabdevon.org/>

³⁸ <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>

³⁹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.exetercityfutures.com/>

⁴¹ <https://www.climatechangenews.com/>

⁴² <https://kaleider.com/>

⁴³ <https://foodexeter.org.uk/>

⁴⁴ <https://stsidwells.org.uk/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.edenproject.com/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/operation-global-action/>

from the University of South Florida came over to the UK take part in Grand Challenges, and others participated in Challenges Online in 2020.

A full list of external partners and collaborators can be found on the Grand Challenges Website⁴⁷.

Figure 22 Brexit Cow



8.2.2. How the Community is Matched with the Initiative

A wide variety of individuals as well as local, national, and international organisations have taken part in Grand Challenges since its inception in 2013. These external collaborators are identified and chosen for their specialist subject knowledge and experience, which is matched to the Challenges on offer to the students. These partners inspire and educate the students through a series of optional seminars during Grand Challenges week, with many making themselves available for the students to engage with throughout the week.

8.2.3. How the Initiative is Resourced

The Grand Challenges programme is funded from the University of Exeter's core budget. The roles of the Programme Manager and Programme Officer are funded centrally and sit within Student Employability and Development.

⁴⁷ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/grandchallenges/moreinfo/expertsinvolved/>

Each year there is an operational budget of approximately £70,000 which pays for the support staff, student representatives and facilitators, external speakers, and additional costs such as technical fees, professional fees, catering etc.

Academic staff working on Grand Challenges are allocated hours as part of their workload planning allocation process. The academic(s) delivering each challenge receive a total workload allocation similar to that for one module, shared between staff, to meet workload requirements. Additional hours are allocated to new Challenge themes to support development work and first-time delivery.

The Grand Challenges expenditure per student has varied from year to year. Expenditure peaked in 2015 at £585 per student, while in 2018 it was just £296 per student. Cost per student depends on the mode of delivery (on-campus versus online), the number of participating students and the provision of “extras” such as catering and off-campus visits.

8.2.4. Outputs of the Initiative

Working within their Challenge Teams, students collectively choose the type of output they wish to create during the week. Outputs are wonderfully varied, but typically, include posters, reports, videos, social media campaigns, websites, blogs, a prototype or design for an app, and games. Other examples have included an educational programme and a ministerial submission.

Examples from the 2018 Climate Change theme include *Climate Heroes*: an app designed to be an engaging way to teach children about sustainability and climate change through a heroes- and villain-based game. In the same year, outputs from the Food for Thought theme included a campaign to promote healthier eating to new students. The *Eat Cheap, Eat Easy, Eat Green!* campaign aimed to raise awareness about the health, environmental, and ethical benefits of a more plant-based diet to first-year students, providing them with ideas for vegan alternatives. Another output that emerged from the Mental Health theme was *Words with Wanderers* – a student-led reading group designed to support the homeless in their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The entire list of outputs from Grand Challenges are accessible from the projects page, Grand Challenges Archive⁴⁸, and Challenges Online website⁴⁹.

8.2.4.1. Beyond Grand Challenges Week

The University offers follow-on support and funding options for Challenge Teams who wish to continue developing their project idea after Grand Challenges, intending to make a longer-term impact. The following support is available:

Student Start-Ups: Students looking to develop a product or start their own business or social enterprise, can get support from the Student Start-Ups team⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/grandchallenges/projects/2018projects/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/careers/events/challengesonline/>

⁵⁰ <https://mycareerzone.exeter.ac.uk/workgroups/student-enterprise-support>

This support comes in the form of interactive workshops and events, 1-2-1 advising, and opportunities for networking and collaboration.

Enactus: Grand Challenges Teams who have worked on a socially focussed project can get their idea registered as one of Enactus Exeter's official projects and receive support and guidance on developing their idea⁵¹.

The Undergraduate Research Showcase: Research posters made during Grand Challenges could be eligible to enter into the Undergraduate Research Showcase. This is an annual competition that gives students the opportunity to win funded places to present their work at the Houses of Parliament or the British Conference of Undergraduate Research.

The University's Environment & Climate Emergency Team: Projects from the Climate Change theme that have the potential to support the University's response to the Environment and Climate Emergency can access support and guidance from the University of Exeter's Environment & Climate Emergency Team⁵².

Alumni Annual Fund: Students can apply to the Alumni Annual Fund if they can demonstrate how their project will impact on the student experience.

Crowdfunding: Students can use the University's Crowdfunding platform to raise funds to develop their projects⁵³.

For more details on Grand Challenges outputs that have been developed into successful projects or entrepreneurial ventures, see the later section on Engagement with Community.

8.2.4.2. Challenges Online 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Grand Challenges team rapidly redesigned their programme, shifting all aspects of the programme from face-to-face to online. Challenges Online included approximately 400 students working in 67 small groups across 16 time zones⁵⁴.

Like Grand Challenges, Challenges Online was a week-long programme where students collaborated to tackle real-world challenges with support from leading academics and postgraduate facilitators. Students addressed problems within the themes of Climate and Environment Emergency, Loneliness and Mental Health, Fake News, or Food for Thought, developing and then publicly presenting their project findings over a week of intensive online activity.

Challenges Online Skills training sessions were all optional, with students being encouraged to attend if they felt that they would be helpful in the creation of the group output(s). The webinar sessions included: How to Design a Mobile

⁵¹ <https://www.exeterguild.org/societies/Enactus/>

⁵² <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/sustainability/newsandevents/climate/>

⁵³ <https://exeter.hubbub.net/>

⁵⁴ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/careers/events/challengesonline/>

App, Online Survey Skills, Digital Marketing, Pitching Ideas, and Social Enterprise⁵⁵.

On the Friday morning, each group presented a 5-minute pre-recorded presentation that was shown to all students and academics working on their Challenge, followed by a live discussion. All outputs were then uploaded to YouTube before the Online Showcase later that day. This year's Grand Finale, showing highlights from across the week was live-streamed on YouTube and was open to all students, university staff, and members of the public⁵⁶. Following the Grand Finale, an Online Showcase provided an opportunity for all participants to browse other student projects and network with students, staff, and members of the public.

Winners from Challenges Online 2020 included a proposal for an annual Black Lives Matter Action Day in universities to raise awareness of issues faced by black students on campus. This output from the Fake News Challenge aims to create a more inclusive environment and cultivate meaningful discussions about race in a safe space. The Challenge winner in the Climate and Environment Emergency theme was *Save our Chocolate*; a series of interactive 'save our' storybooks for children, which educates them on what effect their decisions and choices mean for their environment. Students that worked on these outputs hope to continue developing their ideas with the support of the University.

8.2.5. Planning and Governance of Grand Challenges

8.2.5.1. Grand Challenges Team

Since 2015, Grand Challenges has been managed by a small team comprising Anka Djordjevic, Programme Manager and Simon Pardoe, Programme Officer, who both sit within the University of Exeter's Student Employability and Academic Success (SEAS) Team. Anka is responsible for the day-to-day planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation, and control of the programme, while overall responsibility sits with the Head of SEAS.

During the Grand Challenges week, each challenge is supported by 1 to 3 student representatives, recognised as Grand Challenges experts. This team of approximately 12 student representatives provides practical and logistical support to the groups and academics linked to each theme. They are employed on a part-time basis for the 6-8 months before Grand Challenges Week and help with promoting the initiative on campus, providing administrative support as and when it is needed. In addition to the student representatives, a team of postgraduate student facilitators are employed for the week of Grand Challenges. These facilitators support the individual Challenge Teams in developing their ideas and outputs during the Challenge week. Each year, approximately 12

⁵⁵ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/grandchallenges/moreinfo/grandchallengesskillstraining/>

⁵⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qau9EFhTp3s&ab_channel=JugotonMusic

academics are also involved with Grand Challenges, with 1 to 3 academics, each supporting a Challenge theme.

8.2.5.2. Steering Group

The process of planning and delivering Grand Challenges is overseen by a steering group of 15 staff from across the institution and Students' Guild. The group meet at least twice per academic year to collectively: ensure the programme is aligned with the institution's strategies; ensure the programme makes good use of assets; assist with resolving strategic level issues and risks; approve or reject changes to the programme with a high impact on timelines and budget; provide advice and guidance on business issues facing the programme; and use influence and authority to assist the programme in achieving its outcomes.

Professor Peter Cox is Sponsor and Chair of the Steering Group. He is responsible for championing Grand Challenges within the organisation; delivery of Grand Challenges; providing support for obtaining resources; providing strategic direction; and acting as the decision point for questions outside of the Programme Manager's authority.

For more information on the principles that inform the Grand Challenges initiative, see Appendix 1: Grand Challenges Principles 2019-20.

8.2.6. How the Initiative is Evaluated

Grand Challenges is evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the event. Feedback from participants is analysed alongside the experiences of the individual Challenge teams, facilitators, and the central organising team.

This data is complemented with information relating to participant demographics and attendance at Grand Challenges skills training sessions. This evaluation process has three main aims: to inform decisions about improvements and changes for the following year; to inform longer-term development of the model and delivery of Grand Challenges; and to provide feedback to academic leads, steering group, and senior managers.

In 2020, the evaluation also aimed to understand how students felt about the move to Challenges Online and what they gained from an online-only learning experience. Additional quantitative questions were included in the student survey completed by Challenges Online participants to measure this, looking at the level of satisfaction, quality of experience, and the strength of individual pedagogic principles.

8.3. Engagement with Participants

8.3.1. Students

As an Engaged Learning opportunity, Grand Challenges helps students develop a series of transferable skills that enhance their employability. On completion of Grand Challenges, students receive a certificate of participation, which is also recorded in their degree transcript as part of their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)⁵⁷. Their efforts can also be used as volunteering hours for the Exeter Award⁵⁸, an employability achievement award for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, which is delivered in partnership with the Students' Guild in Exeter and the Students' Union in Penryn.

While Grand Challenges is not credit-bearing, there has been much deliberation over the years as to whether students should gain academic credits for taking part, and this is an on-going debate. Anka Djordjevic, Programme Manager, believes that:

The value of creating a risk-free environment for students to work within so that they feel free to 'have a go' at something different and new to them would be lost if credits were introduced. Many students have said this. The fun and creativity that Grand Challenges inspires are strong factors in its success, and they would be lost if credits were introduced.

Interviews with participants of Grand Challenges, suggest that students choose to take part in the programme for a variety of reasons, including: “to try something new”; “to add [something] to my CV that was more applicable and relevant to graduate jobs”; and “to improve the transferable skills I gained during my study”.

One young person who took part in Grand Challenges in 2017 and has since taken on the paid role of student representative in subsequent years, explained:

I took part in Grand Challenges in my first year, as I was passionate about climate change...I was keen to increase my employability and get stuck into stuff in my first year. I wanted to be able to have something to put on CV, and I was excited by the networking opportunities that came with it.
(Student Rep 1)

Students see the Grand Challenges as a unique engagement opportunity to effectively develop a wide range of employability and graduate attributes in a relatively short timeframe. These skills include problem-solving, innovative

⁵⁷ <http://www.hear.ac.uk/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/exeteraward/>

thinking, leadership, creativity, organisation, project planning, technical skills, academic skills and logical thinking. Many said that Grand Challenges was the best week at University for them and that as a direct result of the event, they feel empowered and have gained the confidence to pursue new careers and opportunities to make a difference in the world:

I have hugely enjoyed my time working for Grand Challenges. It has defined my time at the University of Exeter, and I have benefitted hugely from both the skills development and social connections as a result of the role.
(Student Rep 2)

When asked what the most important thing they gained from taking part in Grand Challenges was, responses included confidence and assertiveness, improved presentation and public speaking skills, a desire to do more collaborative (team) working, and improved critical thinking:

It was strange for me because I'm always kind of like a worker bee... I'm not really one to lead the group, but... you know, I gained a lot of confidence. It was good.... (Participant 1)

Grand Challenges is also an excellent opportunity to make friends with other like-minded people from across the University, while giving them the potential to make a difference. Students appreciate the interdisciplinarity of the Grand Challenges format and that they welcomed the opportunity to work with students from other subject areas:

Grand Challenges unifies people from different disciplines and backgrounds who may have contrasting opinions on a variety of issues of the contemporary world. In terms of personal development, this enabled me to evaluate a particular issue from a number of different perspectives and improve social relations with other people.

Grand Challenges gave me the opportunity to work with other disciplines, which is something that I normally don't get to do. I have learnt the importance and effectiveness of working in an inter/multi-disciplinary group and the ways that we can communicate with each other, bring different ideas to the table and use our individual strengths for the team.

Many students asserted that the improved time-management, organisational, networking, and team working skills they gained through taking part in Grand Challenges had had a positive impact on their subsequent education or student experience:

My time management and organisational skills definitely improved, which has also helped with managing my studies. (Student Rep 3)

...Even though it wasn't like a big certificate or a big award, it was like a personal achievement... it was something which I was quite anxious about before and, I got through it and met some nice people.... (Participant 1)

Others considered that their participation in Grand Challenges led to direct benefits such as a job offer or volunteering opportunity:

I continue to talk about GC in all my applications and interviews even two years later ... because it is often something employers flag up as an interesting project, I did so early on in my university experience. (Student Rep 3)

"I have had Grand Challenges, on my CV since 2017, and I have used them as examples of skills during interviews, including my organisational skills, presenting skills and teamwork skills. I got a volunteer placement after my 3rd year, with the main things on my CV being Grand Challenges. (Student Rep 1)

Similarly, taking part in Grand Challenges changed many of the students' aspirations or choices for the future:

Grand Challenges introduced me to project work specifically related to sustainability – an area I have become increasingly more interested in since completing the programme and I am now pursuing a career in.... (Student Rep 3)

I've never really known what I wanted to do, but after doing Grand Challenges, I think...something that does something real in the world, which is kind of along the themes of Grand Challenges, in something I want to do...stuff like social justice.... (Participant 1).

8.3.2. Community

Since the inception of the programme, several Grand Challenges outputs have been developed into successful projects or entrepreneurial ventures and have tangible societal impact.

The 'Fresh List' is one such project which was conceived by a group of students taking part in the Mental Health Challenge in 2018⁵⁹. The students decided to draw on their own experiences and love of reading to create a reading list for

⁵⁹ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/newstudents/beforeyouarrive/thefreshlist/>

students. Based on their lived experiences of how the start of university can be a particularly difficult and defining time, with significant impact on students' mental health, they decided to focus on new students. They used feedback obtained from a student survey to create a list of twelve books that included 'mood boosting' texts for 'freshers' (first-year students) which included a range of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry that were both enjoyable to read and a helpful escape of the daily struggles of student life. The 'Fresh List' also included books that explore mental health difficulties, designed to raise awareness about mental health problems, specifically those associated with transitioning to university. One of the Challenge team members reflected on what inspired the project afterwards:

We really wanted to create something new and exciting, so when assessing our survey responses, we looked in particular for books that were not overly mainstream, so that we were offering something 'fresh' to our freshers.

Following their presentation at the end of Grand Challenges week, the Reading Agency endorsed the group's idea and advised them through the process⁶⁰. The University of Exeter Library subsequently supported the curation of the Fresh List, with the list also being used by Wellbeing Services as a resource to encourage wellbeing amongst students.

Lee Snook, Liaison Librarian at the University of Exeter Library, explained how the Fresh List subsequently inspired the library to create a wellbeing leisure collection of fiction and self-help books for the first time. Taking the Fresh List and adding "more of the same," the library has since grown the collection and has also added wellbeing games to the resources available. Lee explained:

We introduced the games over a Christmas break. We felt for the students who remained on campus over the holidays and wanted to offer something for them to enjoy...it's been really popular.

Another project that has been developed since Grand Challenges is Recognise RED, an anti-harassment campaign created by students working on the Gender and Inequality Challenge in 2018⁶¹. This output arose from conversations within the Challenge Team that highlighted that young people do not have access to enough information or tools to help them challenge sexual harassment. The team decided to create a simple, aesthetically pleasing social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram. The Recognise RED campaign aimed to improve awareness and end misconceptions about sexual harassment in the wider society by providing both victims and perpetrators of sexual harassment with the necessary tools to recognise, engage with, and discuss the issue. Filipa Torres, one

⁶⁰ <https://readingagency.org.uk/>

⁶¹ <https://www.exeterguild.org/campaigns/active/recognisered/>

of the co-founders of Recognise RED, explained that during Grand Challenges week, the campaign received a great deal of attention and followers from within and outside the University. At the Showcase at the end of the week, the campaign received over 500 signatures from students and staff. Recognising the enthusiasm and appetite for the campaign, Filipa and some of her challenge team-mates, decided to continue developing the campaign with the support of the Grand Challenges Team.

Recognise RED was subsequently adopted by Exeter Students' Guild, with Recognise RED Ambassadors helping to raise awareness against sexual harassment, and hosting talks and podcasts about harassment and consent. Members of the campaign group also advise the University on sexual harassment policy and how to make their website more accessible to survivors. Filipa, who was awarded a Guild Award for her campaign work in 2019, says:

Grand Challenges gives you a platform to do good...the real-world experience of being in meetings and feeling like you're pushing for something that the University and the students desperately needs.

Two years later, and with a new team, Recognise RED remains affiliated to the Guild.

Figure 23 Recognise RED at the Grand Finale



Meanwhile, another output from Challenges Online 2020, evolved from a group working on the Food for Thought Challenge theme, who partnered with the not-

for-profit organisation 'Kids' Kitchen,' which inspires young children and their carers to enjoy cooking together through cooking healthy and sustainable meals. The students developed a key facts resource to help Kids' Kitchen instructors in sessions as well as a storybook for young children, which included some key food sustainability messages and teaches about the Kids' Kitchen ethos⁶². The group developed their ideas with the support of Dr Natalia Lawrence, academic lead for the Food for Thought Challenge and a recipient of a Small Project Grant from the University of Exeter's Education Incubator for her work with Kids' Kitchen⁶³. Rebecca Tully, Director of Kids' Kitchen, said:

We've really appreciated the conversation time we've spent with the students in the group – it's been a great opportunity to reflect. We're excited to use what the students have created to go that next step with families that have questions.

Through introducing students to the world outside the University, Grand Challenges also helps the students become more aware of their local community helping to embed the University in the wider community. Marcus Brown, Digital Making Tutor at FabLab Exeter, says about FabLab's relationship with Grand Challenges:

Grand Challenges gets us to know the student community. It also brings more students into the library...it's also great to be challenged to support students when we have no idea what they are coming in to make.

As Prof Dave Hodgson, one of the lead academics summed up during the Challenges Online Grand Finale:

We have all shared learning with each other this week...It has been excellent, global, online, collaborative and powerful. In no sense have solved [each of the global challenges]... but in three and a half days, we have made quite significant progress towards the achievement of these goals.

8.3.3. Institution

Each year, the University of Exeter benefits from having a large cohort of students returning to study who have gained in confidence and motivation and have enhanced employability-related and academic skills as a result of Grand Challenges.

⁶² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lorn64-DW5Y&feature=youtu.be>

⁶³ <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/teaching-excellence/educationincubator/about/>

Much of the learning from Grand Challenges feeds its way into various aspects of life on campus, including student wellbeing, policy, research and education. This may be through the direct impact from Challenge outputs, such as the concept of the Black Lives Matter Action Day. This output, which received the prize for 'output most likely to influence policy' in the Fake News Challenge in 2020, is currently being considered for future implementation by the University. Other impacts are more serendipitous. For example, Dr Fred Cooper, who led on the Loneliness and Mental Health Challenge in 2020, described how a lot of the learning and ideas he gained from working with a group of 80 students - many of whom have lived experience of loneliness or mental health - informed a briefing paper that he has written for the University to help shape their response to student loneliness on campus.

Grand Challenges is also an excellent opportunity for the University to create new links with external partners, develop existing relationships, and to showcase the innovation and entrepreneurship demonstrated by students who take part in the initiative. As Dr Laszlo Hovarth explained, the external partners he introduced to the Fake News Challenge this year were "*blown away by how professional the outputs were.*" Although difficult to quantify, this type of positive exposure to external organisations has a significant impact on the University's wider reputation as a centre of Engaged Learning and student-led innovation.

8.3.4. Staff

For the academic staff members who participate in Grand Challenges, the week-long event is an opportunity to engage with students and non-academic partners in their field. Dr Natalia Lawrence has co-led the Food for Thought Challenge for the last five years. She explained that she keeps returning to Grand Challenges as "*it's [like] a really fun module...it attracts students who are really committed and passionate.*" It is also an opportunity for her to work with students on a subject (food sustainability) that fits with her personal and research interests. Dr Lawrence also feels that the interdisciplinary nature of Grand Challenges means that it is a good way to be part of the wider University.

Similarly, Dr Fred Cooper describes Challenges Online as an "*absolutely fantastic learning experience.*" He feels that working with students to think about problems collectively and creatively was "*absolutely invaluable*" in terms of his approach to his research.

Significantly, both Dr Lawrence and Dr Hovarth believe that their involvement in Grand Challenges has helped them in their recent promotions, with Dr Hovarth explaining that "*Grand Challenges gives you the opportunity to develop a programme of work.... and be involved with mentoring and teaching in the most exciting way possible.*" Anka Djordjevic also referenced her management of the programme to gain Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

8.4. Added Value for Impact

8.4.1. What Worked Well and What Didn't in the Initiative

Evaluation of the delivery of Grand Challenges allows a comparison of various metrics from year to year. A comprehensive student feedback survey also enables the project managers to assess students' satisfaction with Challenge Week, and changes are made in response to this. The results have shown that student satisfaction with Grand Challenges is consistently very good, with satisfaction rates of 94% or higher achieved each year since 2017.

In 2019, students fed back that the things they enjoyed most from the Grand Challenges Week were:

1. Meeting new like-minded people
2. The talks from experts
3. Working with students from other disciplines
4. Freedom
5. The experience of working in a team
6. Seeing other group's projects at the end of the week
7. Developing the project and making a difference

The student feedback also highlights that improvements could be made in communication during the week, with requests for greater structure, guidance and support from facilitators, and the provision of more opportunities for cross-challenge interaction. Students have also suggested the programme could include more talks from experts, more interaction with academics, and more encouragement and support for continuing the projects after Grand Challenges Week.

8.4.2. Facilitating Factors

The success of Grand Challenges can largely be attributed to having an established model and core team of staff who have developed the programme over the last five years. Simon Pardoe also puts the success of the programme down to the:

...unique opportunity for students to work with a group of like-minded people on a topic that they are really passionate about, with the freedom to take it in any direction they want to and develop their skills experientially.

8.4.2.1. Challenges

Maintaining a successful Grand Challenges programme relies on the permanent project team (Anka Djordjevic and Simon Pardoe), and the support of additional

staff and students in the lead-up to Grand Challenges week. Sharing of staff resources with other ‘seasonal’ programmes could provide mutual benefits and improve the resilience of Grand Challenges to the loss of its key staff.

As Simon Pardoe explains, one of the biggest challenges is the way that, regardless of the amount of planning, the workload always ends up being clustered in the months immediately before Grand Challenges week as so many aspects of the preparation cannot be completed until closer to the week:

With so many people involved, we end up with a tidal wave of work to be done in a very short space of time.

Other challenges include the capacity of campus infrastructure and services to cope with large numbers of participants, alongside quick turnovers and urgent requests generated by the intensive programme. Further consultation with stakeholders is needed in these areas if there are plans to grow the number of participants and the complexity of the programme further.

8.4.3. COVID-19

In 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic posed an unprecedented challenge to the format and delivery of the Grand Challenges initiative. Student feedback suggested that despite taking part remotely from disparate locations, the majority felt that they still managed to achieve a good team working environment and create interesting outputs:

I definitely think we still managed to achieve a teamwork and cohesive atmosphere – despite being miles apart... I think the projects students created this year were just as impressive as those created in previous years, and I think that perhaps those students that did partake took the programme more seriously because there was a need to be focused and committed to your group whilst being apart, in order to work effectively. (Student Rep 3)

The move to Challenges Online gave students the opportunity to gain experience of digital collaborative working, which is likely to be increasingly sought after in a post-COVID-19 landscape where virtual working has become the norm. Some students commented that they preferred the lectures and training being online, as this meant that they could pause and watch them again. Some also felt that the online format allowed for greater creativity in terms of outputs. However, there were also limitations to online team working, with technological difficulties and time-zone inconveniences:

When you're speaking or in a group setting only one person can speak, otherwise the audience gets muffled up.... It kind of slows down. (Participant 3)

Many students struggled due to technical difficulties, and this excluded some students from being able to take part ... although we were impressed with how well students adapted and coped with time differences, it was

inconvenient for many groups, and a lot of the people in different time zones ended up dropping out.... (Student Rep 3)

...there were students at a significant disadvantage. Those students who were taking part in another time-zone, or without certain technologies (fast WIFI, microphones, webcams), were largely left out and did not enjoy the week or get anything out of it, despite the best efforts of the student reps and the student groups.... (Student Rep 2)

Although the online format was an advantage for those who wouldn't ordinarily be able to participate in Grand Challenges because of physical location or mobility issues:

It's really good if people who can't be in Exeter for the week of Grand Challenges can still participate in some way... in basically three and a half days we still came up with a project, and we kind of all did our own thing, came back together and it all fits, even though we're in completely different parts of the UK.... (Participant 1)

There were also some benefits for some students who lack confidence in a group setting:

... It's a lot less intimidating to ask a question...people can just open up the camera and send the question through and type in.... (Participant 3)

Nonetheless, the social aspect of Grand Challenges was clearly compromised by being online:

But the social aspect is the nice part of grand challenges...just like when you can chill and meet have lunch together, talk...this time I didn't get to know my team that well coz ... we'd just turn off and go have lunch...not like in the other years when we were like, going to lunch together or go to the pub. (Participant 3)

It was noticeable that all interactions between us as a team were transactional or practical; without the face-to-face running of the week, there was very little space for the natural small talk and fun which normally characterises the Grand Challenges week, for me. (Student Rep 2)

For some, the Grand Finale did not have the same excitement as it would usually have when the teams were able to present the outputs in person:

I think there's something quite exciting about all being there together in Exeter, nervous about doing a presentation.... (Participant 2)

When asked how they would you like to see Grand Challenges run next year, most interviewees replied that they would like it to be back to a face-to-face format. One experienced student facilitator felt very strongly that the online approach led to issues of inclusivity that are too big to ignore. However, most agreed that there were also undeniable benefits to having some aspects online, suggesting a blended approach may be the best way forward. Nonetheless, the Challenges Online Grand Finale which showcased the week's highlights to a wider audience than usual, and is available to watch on YouTube, is testament to the success of the online incarnation⁵⁶. Professor Sir Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter at the time commented:

It has been inspiring to watch this Grand Finale. Thank goodness you didn't cancel it! Well done to every single person involved.

8.5. Conclusions

Grand Challenges is a well-established non-curriculum based Engaged Learning experience that gives undergraduate students the opportunity to apply their thinking, skills, and creativity to a real-world sustainability challenge. This case study demonstrates that there are clear benefits of the Grand Challenges programme for students, staff members, and the wider institution. It is apparent that the wider community also benefits from the initiative, directly through some of the student outputs, and indirectly through students feeling more connected to and embedded within the community.

Grand Challenges is extremely popular amongst students. It is perceived as a sociable, fun thing to do once their exams have finished, while at the same time, allowing them to gain numerous transferable skills and enhance their employability. The breadth of the challenges offered by the initiative helps attract a range of students from across the disciplines, which is a major attraction for students, as well as one of the features that they seem to appreciate most. As students are increasingly keen to make a difference in society, the opportunity to work on a societally impactful topic is a draw for many who participate.

While there are staffing and logistical challenges to putting on this one week-long initiative, Grand Challenges is well resourced by the University, which has enabled the programme to continue to grow and develop since its inception in 2013. The move to Challenges Online presents many new opportunities for how the initiative can continue to grow and develop in subsequent years.

9. Conclusions from Engaged Learning Across Europe

Courtney Marsh, Lindsey Anderson

9.1. Lessons Learned

This compendium describes six varied examples of Engaged Learning initiatives. Three of the initiatives (in Ghent, Turku and Malaga) are examples of curriculum-based Engaged Learning where students apply their learning to a context specific (or related) to their discipline. In Magdeburg, *in:takt* is a concept and a physical space which facilitates interdisciplinary, transformative cultural innovation. In Parma, the “Teaching Placement. Teaching without Borders” project enables incoming exchange students to carry out their traineeship teaching in a school and fully immersing themselves in Italian life and culture. Finally, Grand Challenges in Exeter is an optional, non-curriculum based initiative which enables students to work in interdisciplinary groups to address a societal challenge outside of their degree.

The case studies presented in this Compendium are quite varied, but this is seen as a strengthening factor for the state of Engaged Learning across Europe. The examples provided illuminate the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration among students within the universities as well as the communities they are working together with. The focus within these approaches is how students and communities come together to learn with and from one another to benefit a larger purpose.

While the Compendium functions as a compilation of examples of what Engaged Learning may mean in practice, and the vast benefits they bring, we will discover more of the trials and errors of developing it in the next phases of the CaST project (pilot projects) and bringing the lessons together (Engaged Learning toolkit). However, there are already some constructive reflections to be made. Perhaps one of the biggest lessons learned through the evaluation of the case studies presented in this Compendium is that without the dedication of the staff involved, there simply would be no initiatives of which to speak. The staff involved throughout the six countries were paramount in the success of the initiatives, without whom they more than likely would not have begun. Of course, there are other essential pieces necessary, but the dedication of the staff involved is incredibly important. In academic circles it is hard to initiate Engaged Learning programmes if they do not include the catch phrases of employability and sustainability. The higher purpose of education can take on a less important role to accommodate more administrative tasks, such as the forementioned employability and sustainability.

This even more so highlights the necessity of the dedicated staff members who keep the initiatives alive to benefit all involved.

This considered, one of the issues evident in the case studies presented is the lack of incentives or rewards given to the staff involved with the initiatives from the university or otherwise. The benefits to both the students and community these initiatives are involved with have been demonstrated very clearly, but the benefits to the staff are less clear. Of course to consider is the potential for publication and personal fulfilment of undertaking such a task, but this is on a personal level rather than an institutional one. This then begs the question, is this enough? Is the intense, and time consuming, dedication for personal fulfilment enough to keep an Engaged Learning initiative sustained; and further, what happens when those involved leave the institution? While the case studies presented in this compendium have not necessarily provided the answers to these questions, we hope that we have identified many of the benefits and the challenges which have been brought to the forefront to help further reflection.

As discussed in the introduction of this compendium, funding is another aspect of Engaged Learning across the European countries represented here that is an important, yet widely varied, factor. From the authors' experience, Engaged Learning, when officially recognised, is done on a mostly ad hoc basis within our universities, and varies even more when looked at from a country level perspective. Certainly within the EU there is no systematic approach to Engaged Learning at the university or HEI level. While some of the examples in this compendium have been running for many years, and will continue to run in future, there are others (e.g. in Finland) that have been indeterminately cancelled for lack of funding. Though these initiatives take a lot of personal dedication and commitment to oversee the completion, they cannot be sustained without funding and this is a serious issue many HEIs face. Strategic planning for how to plan successful and sustainable Engaged Learning initiatives with tight budgets is an important consideration that perhaps universities could, or should, be more involved with.

9.2. Engaged Learning in the Time of a Pandemic

With the exception of Grand Challenges in the United Kingdom, none of the presented case studies have experienced fully running the initiative during times of COVID-19. However, that considered there are some challenges that have presented themselves early on either in concrete terms, (as taken from the Grand Challenges feedback), or theoretical, as conjectured based on the current running of the initiatives. Some of these practicalities include: disadvantages in access to technology; difficulty fostering spontaneous and productive collaboration among participants and the community; limitations in access based on differing time zones of participants; and a focus on the practical and/or serious side to the work being done that can often limit the fun and/or enjoyment participants would ordinarily get from in person meetings.

As demonstrated with the running of Grand Challenges in the UK, Engaged Learning can be accomplished successfully, through an online platform. However, how each of these particular case studies could be adapted to an online platform is not as clear. With the example of Cannabis Sativa: Proces van een Plant in Belgium, there was discussion of pre-recording the theatre performance and making it available online with interactive voting sessions also being conducted online. In this way the initiative is still possible, though the aforementioned issues around access to technology would still need to be considered. As for the other countries, for example in Italy, the progression of these initiatives were initially halted, but with the attempts to adapt to an online platform, there is some chance they may continue, even in a rearranged way.

9.3. Final Reflections

As seen from the examples given, particularly when reflecting on the feedback taken directly from the students and community members involved, the Engaged Learning initiatives were always welcomed and appreciated because of their practical, and overall, beneficial contributions both on a personal level, particularly for the students, and the community.

With regard to the Malaga case study, the work done by the students was taken on at a policy level to help improve the lives of immigrant women in the community. In Exeter, Grand Challenges goes beyond the walls of the classroom, and even the local community, to make a global impact with topics around #BlackLivesMatter. In Parma, students are being inspired to new career paths after seeing what they can contribute to the local community. Turku has forged strong ties between members of different communities by working together to build an environment of social cohesion. Magdeburg creates a space for social reflection and community engagement. Finally, Ghent has inspired a dialogue on the treatment of cannabis in society.

Though this Compendium has had a major focus on the differences found among the Engaged Learning policies and examples presented by the six CaST involved countries, this was always intended to be viewed as a strengthening factor. Engaged Learning thrives in its uniqueness and this is well represented within CaST.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Grand Challenges Principles 2019-20

1. The aims of Grand Challenges will link strongly to those of the Education Strategy, e.g. to encourage research-inspired, innovative, multi-disciplinary, enquiry-based learning and improve the employability attributes of our graduates.
2. The topics covered will link to the University's HASS and STEM strategies where possible.
3. The programme will allow students to co-create some aspects of the Grand Challenges Week.
4. Grand Challenges Week will be open to all undergraduate students.
5. Grand Challenges Week will take place after the end of exams.
6. It will aim to recruit approximately 450 participants, across six challenges.
7. Grand Challenges will be a challenging, fun and engaging learning experience.
8. Challenges will be led by academics. Postgraduate students and the wider academic community (i.e. academics from different disciplines) will be involved and support the Challenges.
9. Employers, alumni, honorary graduates, local businesses and the local community will be engaged in Grand Challenges in some form.
10. Students from Penryn campus will be offered an opportunity to attend Streatham Challenges.

Pedagogic foundations

Challenges should be built around four pedagogic foundations:

1. Interdisciplinarity

Each Challenge is based on the idea that students will benefit from learning about concepts which transcend disciplinary boundaries and that they will be able to transfer some of their new knowledge and skills into their University programme during subsequent years. Challenges will promote interdisciplinary problem

solving, systems thinking and an understanding of how social, environmental, cultural and economic issues are interrelated.

2. Research-led education

Exeter has a tradition of introducing undergraduates to research skills and ideas and this is embedded in the University's strategy for research led education⁶⁴.

The Challenges should provide a powerful focus for teaching and learning through research and link to the HASS and Science research strategies⁶⁵.

3. Student-led learning

Challenges should be highly motivating and students need to be actively engaged in exploring challenging and exciting ideas. The intention is that they should be active architects of their group learning. Therefore, groups should:

- actively set their own goals;
- take initiative in planning their group activities;
- be responsible for delivering high quality outputs at the end of the challenge.

This approach to facilitating education is often called enquiry based learning. Enquiry group facilitators will be introduced to the principles of EBL in their training sessions.

4. Education for employability

Employability related skills are embedded into the Challenges. The opportunities we will offer our students will be rich in graduate skill development but they may not automatically recognise this. A range of Grand Challenges skills training sessions will be arranged and each Challenge will encourage discussion of the skills learnt during the week as well as completion of an online reflection. A significant link has been made with the Exeter Award; students will be encouraged to include reflections on the work they have done in the application for either the Exeter Award or the Exeter Leaders Award and to surface the relevance of new knowledge and skills acquired with those required by employers.

⁶⁴ <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/about/vision/educationstrategy/aims/research-inspiredinquiry-ledlearning/>

⁶⁵ <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/inspiring/keythemes/>

Globally, there are growing calls for Higher Education Institutions to become more civically engaged and socially relevant while increasing public interest in the impact of universities on their localities and regions. Engaged Learning facilitates students to apply theory to real-world contexts outside of the University and to co-produce knowledge with and for the community. Engaged Learning provides students with the skills which increase their employability, and improve their personal and professional development, while communities gain access to skills to help develop, evaluate, or communicate their work with regard to actual societal challenges.

To enhance the knowledge and understanding of what constitutes a successful and sustainable Engaged Learning programme an in-depth view is provided into practices from six institutional contexts from six countries throughout Europe. Highlighted is the diversity and flexibility to be found within Engaged Learning initiatives. However, the one constant is each initiative's commitment to a concept where reciprocity between the students, universities, and communities, is prioritised. While the examples themselves differ in their structure and intended outcomes, this diversity is a benefit of Engaged Learning and further cements the varied nature across the disciplines and Europe.

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