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ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME, KEY ACTION 2
CAPACITY BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Furthering International Relations Capacities and Intercultural Engagement to Nurture Campus
Diversity and to Support Internationalisation at Home (FRIENDS)**

14th WEBINAR
23rd November 2021

MINUTES

Venue: online session via Zoom

Attendees: Representatives of the FRIENDS project partners

1. The meeting began by Prof. Dr. Andrew Seddon from Asia Pacific University of Technology & innovation (APU) speaking of the travel restrictions in Malaysia. On June 21st 2021 APU held its Intercultural and International Festival. A second round of Intercultural Passport winners have been announced and a 3rd round will be held in December 2021.

APU have incorporated the IACD MOOC into 38% of the programs and APU is looking forward to extending it to all by the end of 2022. Prof. dr. Seddon mentioned that there is a gender imbalance in course completors due to more males being present currently in technology. 900 students have been enrolled in the FRIENDS IACD MOOC since March 2021.

The following has been planned for WP6 at APU:

6.1 - planned as online events or hibryd;

6.2 - planned for February 2022;

6.3 - started planning;

6.4 - Community development plans – APU is already working with new student representative counsel.

2. Ronald Binati from the Berjaya University College spoke about the Teahouse setup at the institution. For the International and Intercultural Festival, which was completed in August, the ambassador for the EU in Malaysia has attended. Ronald also shared that the IACD MOOC is being incorporated in the Human Resource Management module starting in September 2021. New digital storytelling contest will be held as 20 of the past winners have already graduated.

3. Sirem-orn Prathumthip from Mahasarakham University presented the progress report covering the period from April 2021 until present. As to the International and Intercultural Festival, 3 organizational meetings have been conducted, after which the festival was conducted on 15-16 June as a two-day event. In WP5, the Interim Card Report Day was conducted at all three partner countries in Thailand - PSU, MSU, and PYU. In WP6, the FRIENDS Caravans were discussed between the partners with PSU currently holding one of its caravans at the time of the online FRIENDS meeting.

4. Teena Hernaez from the University of Cebu joined the meeting discussion by providing an update of the IACD MOOC completors at UC. Currently, batch 4 has completed the course.

On national level, total MOOC completors are:

CTU - 433

SLU - 10369

UC - 556

Total Intercultural Passport awarded students with the same number of digital stories received:

CTU - 27

SLU - 76

UC -556

Teena gave an update of the International and Intercultural Festival in the Philippines, all three partner HEIs have completed this activity with more than more than 20000 participants in total attending. The FRIENDS Caravans activity is still ongoing and 6.2 already conducted in the course of two days.

5. Richel Lamadrid from Saint Louis University continued shared with partners that the university is struggling due to the pandemic in regards to organizing the career fairs activity (a lot of bankruptcies and employees losing jobs in the Philippines). In view if the community development plans, each HEI will reach out to adopted communities, but due to Covid-19 restrictions it is difficult to that as of now.

6. In Cambodia Malcolm Wood from DIU continued with an update that DIU is still waiting for approval from the Ministry to reopen for on-campus-teaching (possibility for hybrid classes or swapping classes).

The Interim Card Report Day and International and Intercultural Festival have been completed. The Intercultural Passport is still to be integrated in the curriculum. The FRIENDS Caravans are to be executed starting December, but as it looks like, they will be organized as online events. The same goes for the career fairs – date and method of execution it will depend on the Covid-19 restrictions. Talks have been held with the Islamic community in regards to the community development plan.

7. William Shields of Svay Rieng University added to the update in Cambodia that at the institution some classes were still online. Year 3 and Year 4 have started the academic year and Year 2 will start in December. Year 1 will start in January. As to the activities in WP6, discussion on the career fair is in progress and for the community development plan, SRU is working with a local commune on the Vietnam border.

8. In Bhutan, Leki Dem Tamang from Royal Thimphu College updated the partners on the progress of the FRIENDS project:

- Since currently 73% of Bhutan population is vaccinated, RTC is waiting for restrictions to be lifted in early 2022. The Friends Caravan is planned with the Royal Institute of Management (RIM) and meeting was held on November 9th 2021 to discuss the event. The National Conference on IaH and the Career Fair have also been discussed with RIM. The FRIENDS Reunion will be completed by Spring 2022.

9. At the end of the meeting, Christina Armutlieva of VUM reminded HEIs to send to VUM their financial reports. She also talks about the project funding and absorption of funds since huge savings were generated in travel due to Covid-19 restrictions.

As to the near future partner meetings, Christina mentioned that probably all remaining meetings will be hybrid due to the still existing restrictions across the consortium countries. Another important subjects discussed was the student bootcamp which is planned for late May or early June. HEIs should be prepared to send students to Bulgaria with maybe instead 2 months the bootcamp taking only 1 month long. The latter will allow more participants to join. This proposition is still awaiting prior authorization. New digital storytelling contest should be held and new selection made because those winners who have graduated cannot participate anymore. Since most students will need visa, by the end of February VUM needs to have the list of selected students for the bootcamp 2022. VUM will provide visa letters to be presented to embassies.

10. The session ended with Q&A session.