Deliverable 6.2 –
Innovative short-term physical mobility schemes

Second Report

September 2022

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Abstract	This deliverable D6.2 final report expresses the method and learning curve through a second batch of blended or problem-based virtual short-term schemes. It reflects the applied process based on the Action Plan (D6.1), the overall impact and results. It covers the challenges faced and the solutions found that can relate to an initial form of 'good practise' for future projects.
Keywords	Mobility, Virtual mobility, Physical mobility, societal challenge, external partner, Short Intensive Mobility Programme (SIMP), collaborative projects

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1. Purpose and objectives

Short blended study programmes, called SIMPs (Short International Mobility Programme), are part of the virtual mobility activities that EDUC has conducted during the pilot phase. The purpose of doing so is to experiment formats that are not usual or inexistent within the partner universities, to test and measure the interest and scope of development. We have asked several key questions, such as: *why set up blended programmes? What are we hoping to achieve? How can we make such blended formats sustainable?*

The objectives are multiple, based on the following overarching elements:
● To develop an agile mobility offer that is accessible to a greater number;
● To diversify the learning units available to students, not necessarily based on semester-long courses;
● To have short, focus-driven programmes, manageable for students in their study timetable;
● To develop our university structures by offering course formats open to all students beyond the alliance structure (as those managed by summer school centres) with potential for development;
● To provide agile formats that are open and accessible to all student profiles, including students with Specific Educational Needs.

Such blended programmes are new within the alliance, as well as incorporating external operators into the educational process. The testing ground was on different points
● Are such programmes viable, is there teacher and student interest?
● What types of external partners can be involved and with which types out concrete outcomes?
● Can such short, blended formats be easily integrated into formal study pathways?
● How can such models be supported over time, with a workable and economic model?
● What types of technical consideration are needed to facilitate the running of such programmes?

The process is iterative and dependent on multiple factors that can only be measured over time (setting up a viable economic model, considering societal and environmental contexts that may impact mobility, internal structural adaptations and transformations that take time…).
This report demonstrates the blended projects carried out and the learning outcomes that will feed further reflexion. Although the number of projects is limited, thus care is needed with over-extrapolation, the evaluation process was carefully thought-through and provides sufficient information and data analysis to draw preliminary future scenarios.

2. Blended programmes

Two pedagogical formats have been experimented in short-term schemes:
1) Virtual problem-based programmes;
2) Short-term physical mobilities.

Blended Schemes as defined in the EDUC virtual pedagogical scenarios:

- partially taught in virtual formats with the help of online tools, virtual classrooms, in synchronous or asynchronous modes;

- high quality blended course design and high degree of pedagogical interaction;
- collaborative course design with EDUC partner teachers as contributors;
- virtual session: pre-teaching, preparation, knowledge-acquisition, gaining time in relation-building;
- physical mobility session: practical and pragmatic approach to implement the teachings of the virtual classes.

The **EDUC problem-based blended scheme** has been set up with the following fundamental aspects:
- Two-part programme,
  - 50% is undergone as distant training, virtual classes;
  - Multiple distant frameworks can be applied (1-week full e-tuition, half-days, sessions spread over many weeks…);
  - The virtual part can be positioned either before or after the physical 1-week part;
  - The virtual part includes pre-teaching and teaching concepts, bringing all students to the same level of understanding before meeting physically, cultural ice-breaking and easing interrelations;
  - The 1-week physical mobility is a 5-6-day continuous week, on-site with the host university. This week is directly correlated to the virtual classes and is designed to be pragmatic and practical where possible.
- An external partner is associated as early as the programme-conception phase to provide a societal challenge or problem to which the students are expected to offer solutions. This 'specification sheet' becomes the mainframe of the programme.

Blended Programmes integrate a strong notion of teacher-student and student-student collaboration, whilst incorporating self-study and access to open or dedicated resources. They integrate groundwork and act as solution-providers to external bodies that turn to universities to work on specific challenges or issues. The desire for EDUC is to strengthen such ties with the local ecosystem, to enable bridging between education and the socio-economic basin.

Blended programmes favour inclusion and the capacity to respond to different student constraints in terms of study programmes, availability, personal conditions as well as stimulating or reassuring students as to their capacity to live an international experience and envisage longer-stay mobilities (semester or longer).

3. General framework, process and method

The short mobility schemes worked within the general framework that was established as the Action Plan. This framework is a list of steps that serve as guidelines to aid SIMP programme heads, as well as project teams, to undertake and implement the key building blocks necessary to run such a short, blended programme. The Action Plan was broken down into a checklist that is in Appendix 1.

Projects were detected as emerging 'seedling' projects or project ideas. The purpose was not to take existing and tested programmes and add minor transformations, but to engage new projects and build them up to make them viable over time. In such a way, EDUC contributes to the university's development of local educational offers and provides a nursery for teachers willing to carry short format programmes that are not part of regular study programmes.

The timeline for this second phase was to start much sooner, in January, so that students from all universities would have time to project for their summer period. Although the virtual sessions started earlier, this could be managed in local timetables, however, blocking time for physical mobility abroad led to other constraints for students.

October – December 2021	Programme development, preparation. Preparation of communication and marketing tools
January 2022	Promotion launch through various media formats, depending on local obligations, constraints and media trends (social networks)
February – April 2022	Student selection and programme kick-off with the virtual sessions
Summer 20222	On-site physical intensive week, rollout of the programme with hands-on and practical activities, multinational project and group work.
Summer 2022	Evaluations, data analysis

In order to carry out the process, EDUC developed tools to implement a common and harmonised approach.
● Common promotion templates;
● SIMP Agreement (signed by nominees, sending university and sent to host university);
● Funding rules and agreed amounts, as well as a limitation of 300 € for student contributions;
● Common criteria for student selection, based on motivation, language level, study profile/compatibility;
● ECTS framework for short programmes (set between 4-5 ECTS for all programmes)

The decision was made to decentralise certain tools or tasks, such as
● Communication channels and promotion;
● Application forms and enrolment processes;
● Assessment formats, marking.

4. Execution and outputs: key points

a. Task execution
Three blended schemes were run in the pilot phase. Although only three alliance partners hosted such a project, all six partners sent student participants, providing a full international learning experience.
This report focuses on two SIMPs, hosted by Masaryk and Potsdam University. The project description can be found in Appendix 2.

The two programmes:

University	SIMP Title	Dates and study formats	
Masaryk	Green City	Virtual mobility: Physical:	25th Feb-20th May 2022 17th – 23rd July 2022
Potsdam	Refugee integration	Virtual mobility: Physical:	19th April – 14th June 2022 20th June – 25th June 2022

The programme design incorporated the virtual mobility before the physical week, with the following principles and attributes:

General framework attributes	
Virtual mobility	• Synchronised sessions for pre-teaching and levelling the multi-profile student group; • Additional learning material to individualise the learning experience and enable students to study at their pace; • Provide key terms and notions before the physical session; • Establish and maintain group dynamics through student-mentors; • Develop cultural awareness through activities and gamification; • Initiate virtual networking between the students from 6 universities
Physical 1-week intensive	• Reinforce and complete the notions studied virtually; • Implement a hands-on, practical week, focusing on group-work or physically building/making things (ecological garden…); • Develop group dynamics, networking; • Experience the local culture through field trips and activities; • Professional or technical field trips
Post SIMP programme	• Additional reading or resource material (self-study)

These attributes served as a general model for all the blended programmes.
Careful attention was paid to the study conditions and session lengths during the virtual sessions. Students were asked to work in a quiet and non-public environment, isolated from others in order to concentrate. They were also expected to check their material and ensure good internet connections to secure satisfactory conditions for participation. Session durations were between 45-60mins with regular breaks, to maintain concentration.
Local student mentors were implicated to maintain student interest and momentum in the interim period between the virtual and physical sessions. This was key to maintaining motivation and keeping group dynamics intact.

b. External or associated partners

The blended short-term schemes implicated external partners that provided a problem or expressed a societal issue that they conveyed to the group. The blended programme was designed around the societal issue, for the students to work on in project-mode and offer possible solutions.
Masaryk: The Green City project associated the Brno Town Hall in view of identifying and working on ecological projects, such as solutions for car-sharing.
Potsdam: Refugee Integration implicated local associations dedicated to the arrival of multi-ethnic migrants or political refugees.

The previous project on Social Welfare and Social Ecology in 2020-21 associated NGOs in view of setting up ecological gardens and sensitising the public in sensitive urban areas. This demonstrates the variety of organisations and project types for the blended SIMPs.
Engaging EDUC activities with the local ecosystem is key to developing EDUC's outreach. Such short programmes are well-adapted, to have focused periods that are easy to organise and manage. It brings

added-value to external partners, as they benefit from a multinational environment and multidisciplinary skills sets.

c. Academic calendars

The timeline, as expressed in section 3, revealed still to be too short in terms of selection and launching the virtual sessions. Ideally, promotion and communication would have been more adapted in November for a February kick-off; the impact of different academic calendars, with some partners only starting their autumn semester late October led to a shift in timing. This point is a recurring issue in placing the programme in the most convenient time in an academic period. The result could be a reduction of multiple possibilities and therefore possible bottlenecks if there are many parallel programmes.

d. Student application and selection

In standard application processes, summer school centres receive all applications and make their selection. In the scope of the Alliance, this step was decentralised and onus was put on the home university to make local selections before sending their chosen students to the hosting partner. This unburdens the hosting university from managing hundreds of applications and gives each partner their share of responsibility. It also engenders trust between partners on their home selection. Hosting universities had veto rights and remained the final filter for selection.
This approach was questioned within the alliance as local practices and habits conflicted with the Alliance approach; testing the process has proved fruitful and should be reproducible over time.
A digital application form was conceived globally, with the same question types, format and application tool. This was then duplicated and adapted marginally for each SIMP. The alliance has structured a common toolbox, with application forms, learning agreement templates etc. Care must be taken not to develop a whole process that is in parallel to standard university practices. Further steps are needed locally to fully integrate the application process into home and hosting administrative systems.

e. Evaluation and recognition

A common digital tool was used for evaluating student appreciation, based on a common question-type and focusing on key fields, such as evaluating the setting up of blended SIMP (communication, promotion, selection), the content and rhythm, cultural activities and field trips, the virtual part and physical intensive week. The following table reflects the appreciations received.

Programme name	Home univ	Satisfaction grade (out of 5)	Satisfaction rate (in %)	Overall positive points	Improvement suggestions	Feedback of in-presence activities	Feedback of distant activities
6,2 Migration & integration	POTSDAM	4,62	92%	Overall positive comments. Little to no textual feedback	To make information easier to find	To offer more interactions and activities with concerned minorities	Programme easy to follow at a distance (7/7), very positive overall (little to no textual feedback)
6,2 Green City	MASARYK	4,25	85%	Empowering students on both cultural aspects and climate change notions	More coherence between the programme and the accomodation (e.g more plant-base meals, …). Need for better accomodations overall.	Need for clearer instructions from the teachers and the associated professional partner (here, the municipality).	Some confusing elements in the distant activities, both in terms of instructions and objectives, in regard of what was the offered during the in-presence week.

There is a high satisfaction rate and encouraging feedback on the pedagogical rhythm and approach adopted for the virtual sessions. The possibility for students to work synchronously and asynchronously during the virtual sessions allowed them to marry their regular study programme with this additional blended programme.

Each programme awarded ECTS as well as an EDUC Certificate with learning outcomes adapted to the respective SIMPs. As the intensive programmes are experimental and outside out normal study pathways, all students couldn't attain local recognition. The EDUC Certificate plays a role in this case, providing them with a portable skills document, usable during their career path.

f. Impact

Impact was measured using 2 indicators

1) Fully enrolled student following the complete course;
2) Students completing full applications, not necessarily selected.

The second indicator refers to *potential* interest; this is fundamental as an instrument to detect the general interest in

- Offered topics,
- The calendar periods, compatibility in timetables,
- General interest for short-term schemes.

It also enables a strategic standpoint, to gauge the sustainability of short formats. We could consider that if there is strong interest through the application process, that the student attraction to such programmes is positive. At this stage, we can apply simple rules of extrapolation to determine the capacity for scaling the interest over time.

Each SIMP was limited to a total of 30 places, deemed manageable numbers for a short mobility scheme. However, each SIMP also generated a degree of interest which is a demonstrator of the impact of EDUC activities. As a totally new activity for some partners, this is revealing of strategic opportunities to develop activities further.

SIMP Type	Organiser	Title	Period	Total
6.2	Pécs	Social Work, Social Ecology	April - Sept 2021	213
6.2	Masaryk	Green City	February - July 2022	130
6.2	Potsdam	Refugee Integration?	April - June 2022	208
			Total	551

There is quite a strong overall interest in all 3 SIMPs which remains encouraging as blended formats are totally new within the alliance. The agile aspect of mixing virtual and physical formats could be one of the differentiating factors compared to having to commit to a full semester mobility or even two consecutive weeks. For 90 student beneficiaries, reaching over 500 applicants is extremely positive for future development.

g. Sustainability

For SIMPs to become sustainable and autonmous, they would need to gain certain properties that would enable them to stand-alone without strong support mechanisms that EDUC has provided up to now. To

maintain the present path would mean creating dependencies on mechanisms that are designed to be temporary or may change over time. For SIMPs to withstand the test of time, they would need to consider:

● The topic or theme that is offered (is there a market? Is there competition with similar programmes, at home or abroad?);
● The financial and economic model (how are the inherent SIMP costs covered? Is there leverage enough to break even? Is the objective to generate revenue? Does the model qualify for external funding, either national or European?);
● Having short schemes recognised in regular study programmes (embedded in programmes as elective modules, minors or equivalent; registered in administrative systems so as to recognise credit transfers).
● Maintaining strong ties with the local ecosystem and finding common benefits on both sides.

5. Learning curve

a. Problems encountered and solutions deployed

The following problems have been identified in the process of setting up the blended programme. Solutions are briefly described.

	Problems or Challenges	Solutions
Academic calendar match-making	The 6 universities have different academic start-end periods; finding common coherent periods to attract students from all partners	Calendar benchmarking, identification of periods to exclude or avoid, two periods defined Spring and Summer (to avoid winter)
Student dropouts between virtual and physical sessions	Students losing momentum or faced with constraints impeaching participation in the physical mobility	Initial solution is to replace the student and to enable catch-up through asynchronous virtual content. Limited solution as the blended programmes are a 'package'
Onboarding guest teachers	Key point was how to identify and attract teachers to participate, especially for the virtual classes, how to determine which teachers are retained?	Agile approach adopted, with micro-networking and known local contacts as opposed to general call for participation.
Connecting field work and academic theory	Some students did not see the connection between the theory and practical implementation.	During physical mobility, when students are in an external company, there should also be programme elements on campus to give them a sense of connection with the university.

6. Acronyms

EDUC: European Digital UniverCity
SIMP: Short Intensive Mobility Programme / Short International Mobility Programme
VM: Virtual Mobility
MUNI: Masaryk University
UPN: University of Paris-Nanterre
UP: Postdam university
UR: Université de Rennes1
UNICA : University of Cagliari
PEC: Pécs University
WP: Work Package

7. Appendices

Annexed to this report:

- Appendix 1: Blended SIMP checklist
- Appendix 2: Bended SIMP descriptions

End of report

Appendix 1: Blended SIMP Checklist for project leaders to aid in preparation

	EDUC University XXX	
	Checklist for EDUC WP 6.3	
Management of program		
☐	Academic Leader	[enter name]
☐	Program Leader	[enter name]
☐	Ensure 3 universities can contribute	[a min. of 3 universities should teach in the program, it should be confirmed that this is possible]
☐	**Learning Outcome**	
☐	Study Area	
☐	External Partner	[not required]
☐	Study Level	
☐	Experience Required	
☐	Purpose of the program	
☐	**2-Week Mobility**	
☐	When	[when can it run]
☐	Where	[city, country]
☐	Format	[logistics on how it will be offered]
☐	ECTS	
☐	# of host university lecturers	[do not need names at this point]
☐	# of EDUC university lecturers	[do not need names at this point]
☐	Payment/incentive	[confirming that this has been resolved]
☐	Goal of mobility	[academic purpose and how it is connected to the location = why should it be offered in this location]
☐	Academic content	[example of site visits that are linked to the course purpose]
☐	Social and Culture programs	[examples of social and cultural programming that will be provided]
☐	1 class on local language	[survival class]
☐	Program fee	[cost per student excluding travel - good idea to have a budget with less then the required number of students, in case some drop out]
☐	Accommodation	[confirm there is accomodation, and that it fits in the budget]
☐	meals	[what is included, and articlate what students need to cover themselves]
☐	social programs	[will there additional cost to offer these programs]
☐	**Promotion Plan**	
☐	Communciation to students	
☐	Creation of promotion materials	
☐	**Selection Plan**	
☐	Describe the selection requirements	

This does not reflect the Action Plan steps, but is designed to complement the Action Plan, specifically for teachers and programme leaders from an operational point of view.

Appendix 2: Blended SIMP descriptions

Project title	Green City
University	Masaryk University
Format (blended/full physical)	6.2 Blended

Dates/periods	25 February-20 August	**Rhythm**	5 Friday classes between 25 February – 13 May
Number of applicants	130	**Number of participants**	30 at the beginning, 11 students dropped out, 2 were replaced for a total of 21 students who showed up in person.

Student levels and disciplines			
	Name of the degree/programme of study	**Level of study at the time of application**	**Year of study at the time of application**
	Double Licence Eco et gestion [Economie] - MIASHS [Math appliquées]	Bachelor	3rd year
	International relations and energy security	Master	1st year
	Commerce and Marketing	Bachelor	2nd year
	International Management	Master	2nd year
	International Relations and Energy Security + Environmental Studies	Master	2nd year
	Green City	Bachelor	4th year
	Regional Development	Master	4th year
	International Relations	Master	2nd year
	BSc Business administration	Bachelor	3rd year
	Bachelor's in Psychology	Bachelor	3rd year
	Environmental studies and Economics	Bachelor	1st year
	Double licence Eco-Gestion [Economie] - MIASHS [Maths appliqués]	Bachelor	3rd year
	Political Sciences	Doctoral	1st year
	master Astrophysics	Master	4th year
	Msc. Economic Policy and Quantitative Methods	Master	1st year
	Science Politique	Bachelor	3rd year
	Master's Dregree program in Environmental and Land Engineering, Environmental Remediation Technologies curriculum	Master	2nd year
	Remote sensing, geoInformation and Visualisation	Master	3rd year
	Philosophie Politique	Master	4th year
	Environmental Studies	Master	5th year
	Teacher of Biology and Teacher of Geography	Bachelor	6th year

Prerequisites	The course is open to all students, but is particularly suited for students in late bachelors/masters studying economics, civil engineering, environmental studies/sciences and who have experience in data analysis, qualitative methods and text analysis.

Short description of the programme and objectives

This blended course provides students three very different fields of study such as transport, waste management and health on the common intersection in the light of applied potential in the policy-making process. This course is designed in partnership with the Brno City Municipality. Students will learn fundamental information to be able to provide the Brno City Municipality with working papers which will be used in policy making decision of the future of City planning.

Students were expected to create working papers for the Brno City Municipality and present their findings during the in person week. These working papers are meant to be used by the BCM in their city planning.

https://www.muni.cz/en/admissions/educ-alliance/green-city

Outcomes, student and teacher feedback
Overall, the students who completed the full course seemed to largely enjoy it. The teachers were impressed with their during the in person week, the students appreciated the different site visits: SAKO waste treatment plant; Hoštitin – environmental village; Nadace Partnerstvi – NGO environmental research centre/open garden; and Špitalka – a district that is being changed into a 'Smart city' (this was the least popular, the teachers seemed to not explain to the students clearly that it is 'in process'). The Brno City representatives found the presentations to be very interesting and refreshing to hear new ideas about how they can do things differently. https://metropolitni.brno.cz/en/studenti-prezentovali-napady-jak-zlepsit-brnenskou-metropolitni-oblast/ Quote from student: "The Green city program gave me a completely new experience. It was the first time I was a part of a long-term project within a bigger group of people. Sometimes it was very challenging but also exciting. It enabled me to expand my knowledge in the environmental field and at the same time to work on a meaningful project that could have an actual impact or at least, serve as an inspiration. Also, I learned how important communication and cooperation are and met amazing and inspiring people from all over the world."

Good and best practices, recommendations
Creating final projects that had a higher purpose motivated the students to work together. Getting the students in person to finalize the projects was incredibly successful, and having the students practice the presentations, providing feedback. The online classes were spread over the semester, in general this provided more flexibility to attend, but had a harder time to maintain focus the whole semester (can be improved). Students reflected that this was a better system then if it had been an intensive week online, since they wouldn't have had the same flexibility.

Hurdles encountered	Solutions implemented
Clearer instructions by teachers for the online classes and more arranged meetings between students online to encourage project completion. Students dropped out because the work waited to the last minute and stressed them out. Students working remotely, drop outs, understanding the goal (communication). Erin was out sick during the first 4 days of the in person week which caused some more complications – but a colleague stepped in and helped.	In May, the teachers reached out to students once they realized the students were struggling with creating a final product, and then rearranged the first day of in person to have each group present their presentations so there was feedback time and they could improve for the BCM.

Things to (re)consider, programme improvement areas
Our teachers are already reflecting on the online portion, how to better increase participation and collaboration, as well as recognizing they had to manage the groups more than they are used to. This will, hopefully, assist in limiting drop outs in future courses.

Project title	Refugee integration. Critical reflections on history and the present.
University	Potsdam
Format (blended/full physical)	blended

Dates/periods	Virtual: 19 Apr – 14 June Physical: 20-25 June	**Rhythm**	Virtual: 1 lesson per week Physical: whole week
Number of applicants	208	**Number of participants**	23
Student levels and disciplines	Upper level BA/MA students of history, political sciences, cultural sciences, law & philosophy		
Prerequisites	English level B2 at least		

Short description of the programme and objectives

This intensive course delves into the global history of processes of refuge-seeking: it explores the many challenges that refugees and migrants face and the opportunities they create in receiving countries. It engages the manifold ways in which citizens have responded to migrants and refugees over time – from the Huguenots' arrival in Brandenburg-Prussia in 1685 to the present – and in various places, including France, Australia, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Germany. The course also examines the responses and visions of migrants and refugees themselves. In Potsdam students will meet with local decision-makers, civil society and church representatives, and migrants and refugees to learn first-hand about practices and issues relating to migration and integration.

Overall, the aim of this course is to provide students with the theoretical and conceptual language to make sense of historical processes of refuge-seeking and integration as well as enabling a lively exchange between student perspectives and practitioners' insights on processes of integration in the city of Potsdam.

Outcomes, student and teacher feedback

Learning outcomes:
• Complicating understanding of integration / multiculturalism / assimilation
• Understanding historic roots of present-day integration challenges
• Realizing global scale of integration measures
• Reflecting on interconnections between refugee and migration integrationSkills:
• Critical reading and reflection skills
• Analysis of primary and secondary sources
• Teamwork
• Oral and written presentation skills
• Intercultural skills
• Transfer skills from historic case studies to present circumstances

Good and best practices, recommendations

Use the EDUC moodle for announcements and for providing the EDUC certificate digitally

Hurdles encountered	**Solutions implemented**
- starting with the virtual part had the small disadvantage that the students did not know each other and were therefore very restrained in their participation. Most of them switched off their videos, thus the learning atmosphere was strained. - Partially insufficient knowledge of English to understand and apply scientific texts	- depending on the course content and learning method, it would also be conceivable to start the course with the physical part. This would potentially make the subsequent virtual learning phase more interactive; - proofing English knowledge better.

Things to (re)consider, programme improvement areas

- better agreement with partner hotel