

SPACE project summary

Project title: Supporting Professionals and Academics for Community Engagement in Higher Education (SPACE)

Funding: Erasmus+ Key Action 2, Cooperation partnerships

Project duration: 36 months (1 September 2023 – 31 August 2026)

Project budget: 400.000 EUR

Objective: To strengthen community engagement in higher education in Europe.

Specific objectives:

1. Incorporate new methods and approaches to community engagement in academic practices at 4 universities
2. Improve policies and practices of 4 universities for establishing sustainable and mutual beneficial community engagement partnerships
3. Increase support from universities and stakeholders around Europe for mainstreaming community engagement in higher education

Key work packages:

- Micro-level - Integrating community engagement into academic practice: developing co-learning methods for creating community-engaged curricula
- Macro-level - Building multi-sectoral partnerships with communities: creating guidelines on sustainable university-community partnerships
- Meso-level - Institutionalising community engagement: supporting professional staff to foster community engagement through institutional policies and practices

Expected results: The main outputs will be a co-learning programme for collaborative curricular design (20 participants of in-depth programme; 80 participants of short training) and two handbooks on university-community partnerships and institutionalising community engagement. The outcomes will be new community-engaged curricula and improved policies at 4 universities, and new knowledge resources for universities around Europe to improve their community engagement.

Project consortium

Partners	Associate partners
<p><u>Coordinator:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Institute for the Development of Education, Croatia (coordinator) <p><u>University partners:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. University of Rijeka, Croatia 3. Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium 4. Universitat de Girona, Spain 5. University College Cork, Ireland <p><u>Community partners:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. SOS Rijeka, Croatia 7. Fundació Girona Regió del Coneixement, Spain 8. The Wheel, Ireland 	<p><u>European associations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) 2. European Students Union <p><u>European university alliances</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. EUTOPIA European university 4. European University of Post-Industrial Cities (UNIC) <p><u>Other networks</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Association of Catalan Public Universities 6. Irish Universities Association / Campus Engage

Activities and expected results: key indicators

Work package 1: Project management

Work package 2: Micro-level: Integrating community engagement into academic practice

WP objective	Piloting and evaluating innovative co-learning methods to support academics to integrate community engagement into curricula
Lead	VUB
Main results	<p><u>Outputs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. In-depth co-learning programme for collaborative curricular design developed and implemented with 20 university staff (5 staff from 4 universities): 2.2. Short training/co-learning programme on community engagement in academic practice developed and implemented with 80 university staff (20 staff from 4 universities) 2.3. Joint report on evaluation of training/co-learning outcomes and impacts and on approaches to integrate community engagement in academic practice 2.4. Co-learning methodologies and materials made publicly available for European stakeholders 2.5. Policy brief on effective approaches to integrate community engagement into academic practice developed and disseminated to European stakeholders <p><u>Outcomes /Impact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced competences of academic staff for team-based curriculum (re)design at 4 universities Enhanced competences of professional staff to support team-based curriculum (re)design at 4 universities Revised curricula integrating community engagement at 4 universities Availability of new knowledge resources for academic staff around Europe for enhancing community engagement Enhanced awareness of European stakeholders on value of integrating community engagement into academic practice
Indicators of achievement/ quality of outputs	<p><u>Quantitative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 short training/co-learning workshops (local, with transnational guests) 80 participants at short training/co-learning workshop (20 university staff/ community partners per workshop) 3 in-depth co-learning workshops (transnational) 8 in-depth co-learning workshops (local) (2 workshops per 4 universities) 20 participants at all in-depth co-learning workshops (5 university staff from 4 universities) 8 local community organisations involved in collaborative curricular design process (2 community organisations from 4 universities) At least 4 revised curricula incorporating community engagement (at least 1 from each of 4 partner universities) <p><u>Qualitative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive feedback by training/co-learning participants on value of process and outcomes Average evaluation score 4 out of 5 by training and co-learning participants Evidence of improvements made to academic practice as part of participant reports Positive feedback by European stakeholders on the value of the developed co-learning resources and policy brief



Means of verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of revised curricula incorporating community engagement (1 from each of 4 partner universities) • Evaluation form results • Written reflections of academic staff on the value and outcomes of the improvements made to academic practice • Feedback sessions during workshops (workshop minutes) • Feedback received via email, and during webinars and other public events
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Work package 3: Macro-level: Building multi-sectoral partnerships with communities

WP objective	Co-create and apply guidelines on establishing sustainable and mutually beneficially partnerships between universities and community partners
Lead	UNIRI
Main results	<p><u>Outputs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1. Handbook for mutually beneficial university-community partnerships • 3.2. Policy brief for mutually beneficial university-community partnerships • 3.3. Statement/report from each partner documenting improvements to policies <p><u>Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partners take a leading and influential role in defining how 4 universities can better structure cooperation with communities • 4 universities improve processes and structures for partnerships with communities and for planning and assessing community engagement • A resource and tool is available for community groups and universities (beyond the project) to better plan and structure university-community partnerships • Stakeholders from around Europe are informed about the new tool to support them in establishing partnerships with communities
Indicators of achievement/ quality of outputs	<p><u>Quantitative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40-60 community representatives included in surveys and interviews (10-15 per university location) • At least 8 senior management/professional staff involved in meetings on institutionalising community engagement (at least 2 staff from 4 universities) • At least 40 European stakeholders participate in webinar about the handbook and the guidelines (European level HE associations, networks, alliances, university staff, policymakers, community organisations) <p><u>Qualitative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of improvements made to policies and practice academic practice as part of university statements • Positive feedback from community partners on the quality of handbook, guidelines and improvements made • Positive feedback by European stakeholders on the value of handbook and guidelines
Means of verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements/reflections by SPACE community partners and community representatives on institutional improvements and plans for community engagement at 4 universities • Institutional reports from 4 universities assessing their community engagement and stating plans for improvement • Minutes of meetings with university managers • Minutes/reports with feedback from public presentations • Email feedback

Work package 4: Meso-level: Institutionalising community engagement

WP objective	Support professional and management staff at universities to structure, plan and assess community engagement through institutional policies and practices
Lead	UCC
Main results	<p><u>Outputs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Handbook on institutional (and/or disciplinary) models and policy options for supporting community engagement in higher education 4.2. Institutional reports from 4 universities assessing their community engagement and documenting improvements planned or made to policies and practices 4.3. Policy brief on institutionalising community engagement through governance/coordination mechanisms <p><u>Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced awareness of professional/management staff members on how to support community engagement in higher education Improved processes and structures for planning and assessing community engagement at 4 partner institutions Availability of new knowledge resources and tools for management and professional staff around Europe to institutionalise community engagement
Indicators of achievement/ quality of outputs	<p><u>Quantitative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 8 senior management/professional staff involved in meetings on institutionalising community engagement (at least 2 staff from 4 universities) At least 60 university staff, students and external communities involved in self-reflection process and development of institutional report on community engagement at university (at least 15 participants from 4 universities) At least 40 European stakeholders participate in webinar about the handbook and the guidelines (European level HE associations, networks, alliances, university staff, policymakers, community organisations) <p><u>Qualitative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of improvements made to policies and practice as part of university statements Positive feedback from community partners on the quality of handbook, guidelines and improvements made Positive feedback by European stakeholders on the value of handbook and guidelines
Means of verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements/reflections by university management representatives on institutional improvements and plans for community engagement at 4 universities Institutional reports from 4 universities assessing their community engagement and stating plans for improvement Minutes of meetings with university managers Email feedback

Work package 5: Dissemination and wider impact

WP objective	Raise awareness and foster support of targeted stakeholders at the local and European level to ensure the wider impact and sustainability of project results
Lead	IDE
Main results	<p><u>Outputs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'SPACE' sections created on European web platform for community engagement - Community-Engagement.eu. • 1 SPACE social media profile created • 3 project publications formatted, translated in 4 languages (12 publications) and disseminated • 3 policy briefs formatted, translated in 4 languages (12 publications) and disseminated • 5 SPACE multiplier events on project results (1 in Brussels, Cork, Girona and Rijeka and Zagreb) • 1 final SPACE project conference organised in Brussels • 5 international conferences attended to present SPACE results (e.g., EUA, ACA, EURASHE annual conferences, Living Knowledge, NCCPE Conferences) <p><u>Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced awareness of local stakeholders on value of integrating community engagement into academic practice • Enhanced awareness of European stakeholders on value of integrating community engagement into academic practice • Connections established with new individuals and institutions wishing to establish cooperation and partnerships to further work on community engagement in higher education
Indicators of achievement/ quality of outputs	<p><u>Quantitative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 participants of multiplier events (20 participants per multiplier event at 4 universities and at IDE) • 40 participants at final conference (European level HE associations, EU institution representatives and local university/community representatives) • At least 100 participants of conference sessions on SPACE project (at least 20 per conference) • At least 30 posts on SPACE Twitter profile during project duration • At least 20 individuals/institutions outside the project consortium contact SPACE team to enquire about project or to express interest in using tools and/or in establishing cooperation and partnerships on community engagement in higher education <p><u>Qualitative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback by event/conference participants on value of SPACE project and its results • Positive feedback by European stakeholders on the value of the developed methodologies and recommendations
Means of verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists of participants / photographs • Web and social media statistics • Evaluation forms results and qualitative feedback • E-mail communication and feedback • Minutes of meetings with stakeholders,