

**Development of an innovative
approach for training
for university professors
to work in the modern, diverse
and intercultural environment.**

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Preface

What is the specificity of universities? Why are they more than higher education schools? Why are they incomparable with schools outside Western culture? The answers can be found in the roots of universities, in the Middle Ages, when the idea was born. Universities are not only schools, for teaching is not their sole function, thus it is better to describe them as spaces for developing the sciences and arts. In times of social division they were a mainstay of equality and inclusion regardless of one's country of origin, social or financial status. All those who loved knowledge had the opportunity to devote themselves to both acquiring it and creating it. The only criterion for belonging was belonging to the Christian world, and thus being faithful to universal, Christian values. Over the centuries, universities have not lost this idea, although it has been diminished by the development of national societies. Each major country had its own university, so they became an element of a given national culture. Nowadays, with increasing globalization, people's mobility, but also the necessity of international cooperation in creating science, universities are again becoming more

and more open to the international community. But are they prepared for this from a didactic point of view? Studying the literature on the subject and reviewing numerous research results in this field, it seems that while young people find it easier to identify methods of intercultural communication, there are huge problems with the adaptation of the discourse from the academic staff. There are no comprehensive courses for staff on how to deal with a multicultural group of students.

The UniCulture Project aims to develop knowledge and skills among academic teachers in a multicultural environment. The recipients of the project are academic teachers, however the beneficiaries are all the university members: from students, through teachers, to the administrative staff. The results of the project will cause more efficient academic work in every field, including research, in which international students can be included with all their knowledge and experiences, to the social life, when they will become a part of the university community.



1. The Idea

The philosophy that stands behind the outcomes of the UniCulture Project is not only to teach the teachers, but to create a synergic methodology and a set of tools that integrate and joint knowledge distracted in the academic world of information.

By combining the main theories with exercises, guidelines, and examples of good practices, the UniCulture Project offers the full package for developing, increasing, and maintaining the inclusive multicultural environment at universities. Moreover, each project result can be used separately, depending on the stakeholders' needs. It can be included in the academic curriculum, used in courses and training sessions, and can also be useful in other institutions, such as state administration, cultural institutions, or NGOs. The universality of the set of project results lies in the fact that it contains knowledge and know-how that relate to the contemporary, increasingly multicultural world, and although they were created with a focus on universities, they contain information and data that may relate to society more broadly, including every professional group. The issues of globalization, individual and collective identity, and the approach to multiculturalism concern every contemporary society, and issues related to the methodology of learning through technologies may be of interest to every teacher, not necessarily related to the university. In addition, the design of the project, including the educational online platform and the blended learning method, ensure interactivity, thanks to which the project is a platform for the exchange of experiences and can be a basis for the development of new solutions.





2. The Structure

The structure of the project is designed upon professional literature, analysis of the needs and experiences of the authors - project partners. It is composed on two levels: tooling and content.

From a tool perspective, it is based on the methodology of activities, content, both in theoretical and practical terms, an educational platform for content implementation and a methodological guide for trainers. Additionally, the material includes tools for self-diagnosis and control tests. The methodology is thus based on self-education and peer education, which allows for the exchange of experiences and the expansion of the content of the materials.

The content consists of five different supportive materials:

- **Result 1:** The framework with a short but complete description of the methodology of the whole project.
- **Result 2:** The Handbook with packages of knowledge, divided into four main chapters:
 - Socio-cultural competencies in multicultural and intercultural environments
 - Models for education
 - Theoretical approaches and technologies of interactions with multilingual students
 - Social inclusion in the university.
- **Result 3:** The Workbook with case studies, exercises and examples of good practices, divided accordingly and related to the Handbook.
- **Result 4:** The Manual for Trainers in which the methodology and approaches are explained for the trainers who will facilitate the course based upon the Handbook and the Workbook.
- **Result 5:** Guide on intercultural communication and social inclusion, which is the short, easy to show document that is a set of the most important information on communication skills and issues raised in the handbook.



3. The Content

Main areas and approaches of the whole project content are detailed in the UniCulture Handbook followed by practical parts included in the Workbook. It consists of four chapters with subchapters as follows:

1. Socio-cultural competences in multicultural and intercultural environments

- 1.1. Globalization from a social perspective
- 1.2. Culture as a social phenomenon
- 1.3. Social and cultural competences
- 1.4. Multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism
- 1.5. Social and individual identity
- 1.6. Symbolic communication in multicultural environments

2. Models for education

- 2.1. Education in a multicultural environment
- 2.2. Dialogue and communication in a multicultural and intercultural environment
- 2.3. Inclusive education from a multicultural and intercultural perspective
- 2.4. Application of education models in multicultural and intercultural environments
- 2.5. Intercultural approaches in the development of a European educational system



3. Theoretical approaches and technologies of interactions with multilingual students

- 3.1. Educational paradigms of studying in a multicultural environment
- 3.2. Psychopedagogical development of students in multicultural and intercultural environments
- 3.3. The value-oriented model of social behavior
- 3.4. Didactic-metric methods and procedures to assess students' level of knowledge
- 3.5. Tools for education in a multicultural and intercultural environment

4. Social inclusion in the university

- 4.1. Features of social inclusion in higher education
- 4.2. Areas of social inclusion within the university
- 4.3. Factors of policy-making strategies for social inclusion

All parts are written upon an international and current scientific bibliography and represent the highest academic standards.



4. The Partnership

The consortium consists of an international, diverse group of institutions with vast experience in both research and training. The project coordinator is Transylvania University of Brasov, which is the largest comprehensive public university in the central region of Romania. They have a dedicated research centre on communication and social innovation that promotes action-research bringing together theory and practice.

The partners in the project are:

Buckinghamshire New University, which is among the leading universities in the UK and has a special Centre for Social Entrepreneurship. BNU supports research that contributes to the theory of social entrepreneurship and its practical applications to address local problems in disadvantaged areas.

University of Zagreb, which offers more than 100 study programs including Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy, etc. The project staff are among the lead researchers in projects that deal with the topics of education, social inclusion, and democratization of society. Both have a huge number of publications on the topic of education, citizenship, and intercultural training.

Foundation for the Development of International and Educational Activity – FRAME, which is a young foundation created in response to the observed changes in the socio-economic environment of Poland and Europe. It works to develop and promote international cooperation of local communities supporting education, professional activity, and the well-being of citizens. They cooperate with a wide range of cultural organizations, associations, and foundations, as well as local and national authorities. FRAME experts have been involved in numerous projects on multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Pax Rhodopica Foundation, which is an NGO located in Bulgaria with experts that have profound expertise in EU project management. PRF staff work in close cooperation with various organizations including universities, VET providers, social partners, entrepreneurs, etc. on local, regional, and international level.

Thus, the consortium provides the fields of academic experience and practical knowledge regarding education, training and management; by bringing together the various experiences of the partners there is not only a harmonious cooperation that appears, but it also brings an effect of synergy.



5. The Dissemination and contact

The project details can be obtained from the webpage of the project: <https://uniculture.unitbv.ro/>

It is also present on the social media (Facebook®):
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICULTUREproject>

The educational platform can be found on:
<https://edu.unitbv.ro/login/index.php?lang=en>

To enter the platform, registration is required as well as acceptance from the administrator that can be obtained by emailing to the local coordinator of the UniCulture project (see below).

To receive answers to your questions, please contact the local coordinators:

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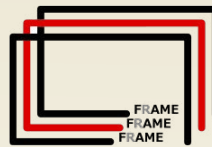
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