December 2022 | Nr. 2

NEWSLETTER

News and Updates on the Erasmus+ Project

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

SysMind

DISCOVERING A SUSTAINABLE MINDSET

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Editorial

The work of the SysMind team is progressing intensively. Online meetings are taking place, providing a solid working platform. At the end of September 2022, the second transnational meeting of the project team took place in Skopje/Macedonia. There, the international group was able to experience an excellent work and cultural programme. The articles on pages 2 and 3 report on this. In Skopje, the team experienced a change in the management of the project. The handover of functions has taken place online. The previous project manager is thanked on page 4 and the new manager also introduces herself there. An intensive discussion was held on the topic of the curriculum for the MOOC programme. In an intensive exchange between the project partners, a draft of the curriculum was presented for discussion. The drafts, which are presented on page 5, form the basis for further work. Equally important was the discussion on spirituality, values, meaning. The option emerged that the focus in creating the curriculum should be on integrating the spiritual approach into the theme of sustainability. The International Education Network PILGRIM, which has been a cooperation partner with SysMind from the beginning, has gained many years of experience in the field of integrating spirituality into pedagogy. PILGRIM founder Johann Hisch reports briefly on this on page 3. In Skopje, the dates for the next meeting in Spain were set. All SysMind partners should conduct an intensive search for educators to test the draft programme in practice. The invitation and the dates for the educators can be found on page 6. Also there the important concerns of quality management.

2nd transnational meeting in Skopje/Macedonien

Contents, cultural program

In the days 27-28 September 2022 the second transnational SysMind meeting took place. This time it was at the Faculty of Philosophy of *Cyril and Methodius University* in Skopje/Macedonia. The participants were warmly welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy Prof. Dr. Ratko Duev and the professors of the Faculty. The organizers have included the following items in the conference program.: 1. storytelling to create intercultural awareness 2. creation of a glossary for our joint work, 3. outcome 2 - SPOC and the deciding how to structure the SPOC | What are our ideas regarding content? Defining learning objectives based on what we have explored so far.

An important course setting at SysMind in Skopje was the discussion about the new draft curriculum, on the basis of which the teacher training should take place. The meeting was organized in presence. Some participants were able to follow the sessions online. An interesting cultural program at the university, a guided tour of the old town and a common dinner in the evening made the meeting a very nice, valuable and friendly experience.

Cultural program in Skopje

University Tour

The University of Skopje is the largest university in the country and has about 50,000 students. It is named after the two saints Cyril and Methodius and was founded between 1946 and 1949.

A tour of the university included a visit to the impressive collection of artefacts in the university's archaeological museum. An interesting collection spanning several millennia was presented to the SysMind team, providing insight into the rich and multi-faceted history of Macedonia. The tour and presentation was excellently prepared and conducted by professors of history and a doctoral student of the Faculty of Philosophy.

Skopje by Night

A special highlight was the tour of the old bazaar district that forms the old town of Skopje. It is located right at the foot of the mountain on which the Tvrdina Kale fortress is enthroned. The alleys and buildings on site are evidence of the Ottoman period. The many jewellery and pastry shops, Turkish restaurants, cafés and mosques are fascinating. The stone bridge, the city's landmark, connects the old town with the modern city centre - it was built in the 15th century and bears the city's coat of arms.

On both sides of the stone bridge, the "Skopje 2014" project was implemented. The huge, modern structures and monuments are impressive, bright buildings built in the neoclassical style that make the city shine. These include many government buildings along the Vardar River and, for example, the Arc de Triomphe. In the city centre there is a memorial house commemorating the life and deeds of Mother Teresa. Another sight is Vodno Mountain, on top of which there is a huge steel cross that can be seen from afar.

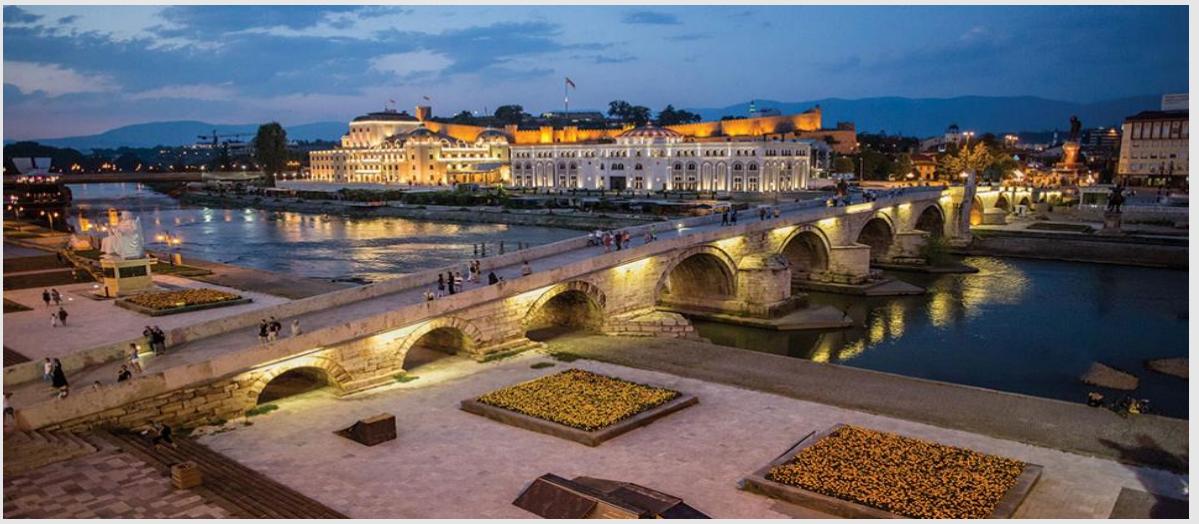
Stefan Sampt

Online participation in meeting

The online participation in the conference in Skopje allowed me to experience at least one afternoon of the discussion about the new concept. It was very pleasant to see all the project participants in this beautiful setting at the University of Skopje

Gertraud Weixlbaumer

The connection of Stone Bridge and SysMind



http://visitskopje.mk/stone-bridge-2

Inspirations of the City Tour

After the walk in the narrow streets of the Muslim part of Skopje, after the delicious meal in one of the countless restaurants, the SysMind group comes to the river Vardar. Here we cross the Stone Bridge. It is not only ancient and beautiful, it is a symbol. This bridge is a symbol of the connection of cultures. It connects the East with the West, Islam with Christianity. It brings together two different halves of the city, it connects Asia with Europe. This bridge is also a symbol for the SysMind project. It connects nature carved in stone with the culture of architecture. It points the way to our goal: to combine sustainability with spirituality. This model is new in pedagogy. We want to take on this task. This is the fruit of the discussions of the project group in Vienna and in Skopje. One wants to stay longer on this bridge. It is imprinted in our memory and in our hearts. On the other side of the bridge, we feel like we are in one of the big European cities. In a large restaurant, our hosts from the Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje give us a wonderful welcome with a hearty dinner. Piotr Kubiak

Understanding of spirituality at PILGRIM

… is shaped by its emergence as a scientific research project. Just twenty years ago, the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture had commissioned the project to examine the three dimensions of ecology, economy and social issues as sources for religious education work as viable. According to the scientific criteria, it was found that the religious societies involved had to present the purely factual issues and attitudes. The experiences from the respective taught, lived and reflected religion could be defined as the subject of a deepened view of the world as spirituality. As a result, spirituality was identified as the fourth dimension of sustainability. The Institute for Religious Education at that time felt obliged to continue this mission in its work. The questions of life touch all people at every age: Why am I here? How do I want to live? What is good? For this reason, all subjects are invited into the work for further processing beyond the religious education and natural science areas and are now common practice. Johann Hisch, Founder of PILGRIM

Contents of the Meeting

Change in the leadership of the SysMind project

Dear Michael Prodinger,
As a team member of the sysmind project, I would like to thank you on behalf of the partner organisations for your commitment as a "midwife". Through your friendly and charming manner, you reminded us of what we had to deliver and when, as those responsible for this project. You created a communication platform, the homepage, and laid the foundation for a good continuation of the work. Now the time has come for you to pass on the responsibility to Silke Schaumberger.
Thank you very much for your structuring and overviews. You have done a very good job! I hope we will be able to welcome you back to the project in other contexts.
Thank you very much!

Klaus Karpf, One of the project initiators

Dear Michael,

all project participants, all SysMinder thank you for your support of our international project in the first weeks and months. You have done a great job! Thank you Michael!

SysMind team

Silke Schaumberger – new SysMind manager

My name is Silke Schaumberger and I am part of the SysMind project team since September 2022, when I took over lead management from Michael Prodinger. As a German living in Austria who did research in an agricultural context for a long time after studying landscape planning, I have personally experienced the challenges of rethinking one's own values and attitudes. I think it is great that the international SysMind team combines its different backgrounds and approaches for working on ideas and tools to initiate and accompany such development processes within vocational training, as we need a more sustainable attitude of (all) people in order to keep our world worth living in!
My professional background comprises completed studies of Landscape Planning, Equine Science, Agrarian Pedagogy and a PhD in Plant Science. Job activities were mainly agricultural research and project work, but also lectures at University and additionally former jobs within the private sector.

Silke Schaumberger

Invitation to international cooperation

Discovering a sustainable Mindset: Blended-Learning Course

One of the aims of the ERASMUS+ Project “SysMind – Developing a sustainable Mindset” is to elaborate an **international Blended-Learning Course**. If you are a **vocational educator/trainer** in the field of applied life sciences (agriculture, forestry, nutrition, horticulture, home economics, green care, nature interpretators, etc.) or in the field of religious education and ethic class, we cordially invite you to take! Within this course we will offer you to become aware of your own attitudes, get to know ideas and methods to increase awareness in your students and involve yourself actively in supplementing and evaluating the course. Based on the implemented Blended-Learning Course, a MOOC (free accessible online course) will be developed.

Activity	Date	Time (CET)	Location
Module 1:			
Pre-online session LTT1	21.02.2023	12:00-13:30	online
LTT1	30 03.-1.04.2023	3 days	FFM, Dehesa San Francesco, Spain
Post-online session LTT1	16.05.2023	14:00-15:30	online
Module 2:			
Pre-online session LTT2	19.09.2023	14:00-15:30	online
LTT2	15.-17.11.2023	3 days	UCAEP Vienna, Austria
Post-online session LTT2	23.01.2024	14:00-15:30	online
Module 3:			
Pre-online session LTT3	12.03.2024	14:00-15:30	online
LTT3	9.-11.4.2024	3 days	LLU, Jelgava, Latvia
Post-online session LTT3	14.05.2024	14:00-15:30	online

More information at your SysMind partner

Quality Assurance

We take our quality standards seriously in the Sysmind project! Even before the meeting in Skopje, a survey was sent out to find out the wishes and needs of the project partners for a working environment that opens our minds. The survey was answered only very cautiously, especially the concrete wishes regarding content. Here, the quality assurance of the project must and can still be followed up. What was wonderfully successful, however, was getting to know each other's thoughts and attitudes during the three days in Skopje. Inspired by city tours, bazaar visits including tastings and culinary exchange, ideas emerged on how inter-religious questions and cultural habits can be used productively for the development of materials for "Developing a sustainable mindset". Perhaps this speaks to a quality work culture that can grow out of the project into their own organisations.

The QUA assurance survey after the meeting in Skopje brought few substantive answers, but good insights into the shared experiences. This is the basis for the development of common thinking patterns - also in the scientific field! Only in this way can knowledge cultures and cultural practices be understood - emotionally and not just cognitively as a quality feature of this project.

Elke Szalaj, Quality maganer, SysMind