

# Inspiring practices analysis

<b>Title of the initiative</b>
Integrate Climate Change as a micro-credential course for applying internationalization at HEIs.
<b>Idea origin (country)</b> The name the country where the inspired practice came from
Palestine
<b>Idea origin (institution)</b> The name the institution where the inspired practice came from
Bethlehem University
<b>Brief description</b>
<p>The aim is to shift climate change as a micro-credential curriculum, from viewing this as the responsibility of environmental science specialists to promoting a climate change curriculum for all disciplines. Climate change is a global issue and a common concern. It must be integrated into the academic and higher education curriculum for all academic disciplines, focusing on applying the integration now.</p> <p>The idea is to offer short forms of virtual education, resembling the patterns of micro-credentials. It is part of a process to bring changes in teaching and learning and enhance the transformative potential of institutions.</p> <p>Climate change presents challenges relevant to all disciplinary areas and governance. The micro-credential course allowed a multidisciplinary approach and widened the target groups including, beyond university students and teachers, also adult learners and senior students.</p> <p>It is part of our responsibility as academics, to prepare all students (the future leaders) for a future of global heating and all the associated challenges. One of our roles as academic community members is to serve society. It includes the development of an attractive, diverse, high-quality educational provision and promotion to attract as many people to education, especially to higher education, as possible.</p>
<b>Idea focus</b> The focus of the inspired practice was on
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Research management</li> <li>○ Research methodology</li> <li>○ Research implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Why is it considered an Inspiring Practice?</b>
<p>The value of the initiative is proven through the words of one of the participating students:</p> <p>"The program was a new experience full of positives and benefits. It changed my point of view on many things. The program covered topics we used to overlook, especially in the Arab countries. We shared a lot about our climate change stories, so we were more aware of this problem in many places on earth. We developed theoretical</p>

solutions that can get us out of this predicament. As a student, I am convinced that it was a character builder program, as it required me to present my opinion to students whose views may differ from what I think. It also allowed me to learn more about what is happening in my country and compare it with other countries. I have become bolder in expressing my opinion and accepting what others say."

Being the course online, granted access to many learners beyond their formal enrolment in one or another programme. It allowed to share experiences as a virtual collaborative space and enabled the knowledge of different contexts, increasing the learner international exposure. The multi-disciplinary approach is also a key element of the initiative: offered programs raise students' awareness of global socioeconomic concerns and challenges from different points of view. It created an opportunity to achieve additional competencies, frequently beyond the significant field of study, and have them formally certified as a valuable educational experience.

### Relevance of the initiative in its specific context

(why was it developed, why is it important in its specific context, what type of change it generated for the target group, relevance at local / national / international)

It was awarded to over 250 BU students from different academic disciplines. It was included in their portfolio (cover letter and resume) as a benchmark, documenting the student's virtual international experience and exposure. Several micro-credentials are now under development for the upcoming academic year 2022-23. We are working not only on micro-credentials intended for undergrads but also for postgraduates.

In our case, credentials were transferred as US academic credit hours. They involved rigid quality assurance, including a thorough formal assessment of learning outcomes based on presenting certificates and badges awarded by external evaluators as measurable learning outcomes based on participation in learning activities. Still, to create a complete micro-credentials cycle, we must jointly develop with partners from industry, local governments, and non-profit organizations or micro-credentials awarded for service to society-based learning activities, which we haven't yet reached this level of integration.

### Target Group of the practice

- Administrative staff
- Academic staff
- University leaders
- Overall community
- Life-long learners

### Impact

How the initiative produced an impact in its context and beyond

To improve the quality of HEIs and strengthen the importance of education for future labor market challenges, strengthening the interaction between HEIs nationally and globally is required. HEIs need to take into consideration virtual collaboration, best practices of internationalization, and the opportunities opened by applying micro-credentials, as a way to improve employability. HEIs must increase their relevance by adopting a transversal entrepreneurial dialogue between local and international universities, companies and decision-makers.

The initiative is a tassel of this long-lasting process. It contributed to the development of a virtual international collaborative space to tackle common challenges, training staff and students on applying a multi-disciplinary approach, strengthening intercultural competences and sensitivity.

The long-term outcome will be to create a civilized and globalized generation that understands local and global issues with self-motivated lifelong learner skills, empowered to enhance professional and leadership skills. The profound impact of applying micro-credentials is developing cross-cultural communication skills and can engage in

constructive dialogue across divides. It will further enable us to connect educators to accelerate the speed and spread of sharing experience and knowledge as HEIs can get a broader panoramic understanding of the future labor market needs and demands.

### Transferability of the initiative

Which elements can be adapted and transferred to other contexts/fields

To replicate the initiative, HEIs shall:

- Engage teachers and develop contents (this can happen engaging other universities at national level and/or other universities worldwide willing to offer a virtual collaborative experience)
- Develop clear incentives for participants to secure engagement and involvement in the process (recognition of participation, possibility of exchanges, introduction of the online course in the study programme)
- Define a clear understanding of commonly used terminologies to set a common ground for understanding
- Keep active communication and information dissemination.

Moreover, the application of a micro-credential approach underlines the importance of assessment of learning outcomes as a critical component of education, including validation and recognition of different learning experiences. This is becoming a raising concern as well as a great opportunity in the MENA region. Adopting innovative approaches allows HE to focus on skills and competences addressing market needs and societal needs.

### Sustainability of the initiative

The factors favoring the success of the initiative over time

Being the initiative based on online collaboration and virtual learning, it can be easily offered by all these institutions having the needed digital infrastructures and/or offering digital access to students and learners. It implies an agreement for collaboration between academics and/or institutions, which can be the starting point for future collaboration and cooperation agreements. It can start as a bottom-up single case (for example including an international virtual collaborative experience within a single course) and later be proposed as a structural change (including micro-credential and virtual collaboration within degree programs). Moreover, climate change may become an issue integrated in each higher education curriculum as a transversal element, fostering integration between disciplines and granting to students and academic a wider approach to such a global issue.

### Contact and references

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Link: <https://onlineresilience.uni-med.net/2022/06/07/what-do-i-need-to-know-about-integrating-micro-credentials-as-part-of-applying-an-internationalization-scheme-for-heis-within-the-labor-market-perspective-updated-06-06-2022>