



FRIENDS

PROJECT NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the 1st FRIENDS Newsletter

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Our group of FRIENDS from Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Turkey, Bhutan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand are pleased to present this 1st newsletter showcasing our activities and accomplishments so far.

If you are committed to intercultural understanding and interested to learn about different cultures and to improve your global skills, stay tuned and follow us every step along the FRIENDS learning journey!



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PROJECT INTRODUCTION



Project Information

The FRIENDS project title stands for **F**urthering **I**nternational **R**elations **C**apacities and **I**ntercultural **E**ngagement to **N**urture Campus **D**iversity and to **S**upport Internationalisation at Home.

The FRIENDS project is built around the concept of Internationalisation at Home (IaH) that reframes the traditional perceptions of higher education internationalisation in the five Partner Countries involved in the project, namely Bhutan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand.

The notion of IaH is based on the assumption that for various reasons the largest part of universities' student body will always remain non-mobile and therefore deprived from access to global knowledge and skills.

The FRIENDS project aims to create a paradigm shift at the 12 Asian Partner Country Higher Education Institutions

involved and introduces an egalitarian community spirit where internationalisation is not a privilege of the few any more but an asset all students can benefit from.

Erasmus+ Programme for Capacity Building in Higher Education

Project number: 598652-EPP-1-2018-1-BG-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

Coordinator: Varna University of Management (Bulgaria)

Project Duration: 36 months - 15th October 2018–14th October 2021



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KICK-OFF MEETING

5th - 8th March 2019

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The kick-off meeting for the FRIENDS project was held at BERJAYA University College (BERJAYA UC) from 5th March 2019 to 8th March 2019. This was the first meeting among a series of meetings that will be held over the next three years at various partner institutions. This meeting discussed the introduction of the FRIENDS project, and how it would develop, while also exploring the development of project task force action plans.

The meeting started off with a welcome by Emeritus Professor Walter Wong, Vice-Chancellor of BERJAYA UC followed by a short opening address by Professor Todor Radev, President of Varna University of Management (VUM). Ms. Christina Armutlieva gave an extensive introduction to the FRIENDS project. More information about the meeting agenda and content could be found [here](#).

The meeting was kept informal and light-hearted with presentations from various partner institutions on the different work packages throughout this three year project. The participants also enjoyed a sumptuous Malaysian heritage cuisine during the welcome dinner at BERJAYA UC's own Upper East Side Café such as chicken satay, nasi lemak, laksa Johor, roti jala, to name a few, as well as an assortment of colourful Malaysian desserts.

It was not all 'work and no play' as participants were taken on a half day tour of Kuala Lumpur and followed by a farewell dinner and live traditional dances at the Songket Restaurant.



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2nd Partners Meeting

11th-14th June 2019

Istanbul, Turkey

Istanbul Aydin University (IAU) hosted the FRIENDS second partners meeting and the workshops on European Higher Education in the World

Prof. Zafer Aslan, Vice-Rector for International Affairs at IAU and Prof. Prof. Hasan Saygin, Advisor to the Board of Trustees at IAU, welcomed the participants to Turkey, to Istanbul and to the premises of IAU and wished the consortium a successful and productive meeting and project continuation. Ayse Deniz Ozkan, Vice director at DIR responsible for global education and partnerships and FRIENDS institutional coordinator at IAU briefed the participants on the meeting agenda and practicalities.

The workshops on European Higher Education in the world were delivered by European partners of the project, VUM, IAU, Silesian University of Technology (SUT) and Budapest Metropolitan University (BMU).

The workshops covered topics such as the Erasmus+ programme for European and international cooperation in higher education; the rationale and strategic planning process for internationalisation, best practices for internationalisation at the university level. We also discussed various study abroad opportunities for students and how to promote them in order to develop intercultural competences of our students and see them graduate as global citizens. The workshops allowed European and Asian partners to share ideas, compare policies and learn from each other. The workshop presentations are available on the project website [here](#).



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FRIENDS “SWAG” Competition

The FRIENDS SWAG Design Contest aims to spark curiosity about the Erasmus+ funded project FRIENDS among the project consortium’s stakeholders. The winning design shall be the official design for all the marketing SWAG associated with the FRIENDS project.

Contest Timeline:

- Opening of Competition: 1st July 2019
- Submission of Entries: 1st July – 31st August 2019
- Judging Period at Institutional Level: 1st – 8th September 2019
- Announcement of Winners at Institutional Level: 9th September 2019
- Announcement of Overall Consortium Winner: 30th September 2019
- Production of SWAG: October 2019



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IaH Capacity Building Webinars

24th July - 14th August 2019

5 Partner Countries in Asia

Four IaH Capacity Building Webinars were delivered by the project's European partner institutions between the 24th July and the 14th August 2019.

The four webinars covered key IaH related topics such as internationalisation of formal curriculum, global competence development in local contexts, virtual mobility, campus diversity and intercultural engagement.

1. Campus diversity and intercultural engagement (delivered by IAU 24th August 2019)
2. Global skills development in local contexts (delivered by SUT 31st August 2019)
3. Virtual mobility (delivered by VUM 7th August 2019)
4. Internationalisation of formal curriculum (delivered by METU 14th August 2019)

The webinars aim to pave the way for large-scale institutional debates on how to stimulate and enhance IaH at institutional level. The discussions will be streamlined through the organisation and facilitation of round tables on the issues of campus and curriculum internationalisation. The output from these round tables will be tailor-made IaH Action Plans for each partner country university that will reflect the institutional commitment and IaH related measures to be taken in addition to the project activities planned for the remaining two years of the project lifetime.

All the files documenting the webinars (presentations and video recordings) are available on the official project website [here](#).



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- IaH Roundtables at partner country institutions
15th August - 15th September 2019
- SWAG winning design announcement
30th September 2019
- Action Plans on how to foster IaH at institutional level
30th October 2019
- 3rd FRIENDS partner meeting, Svay Rieng University (SRU), Cambodia
8th - 11th October 2019



GET IN TOUCH

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 FRIENDS ERASMUS

Partner Institutions



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